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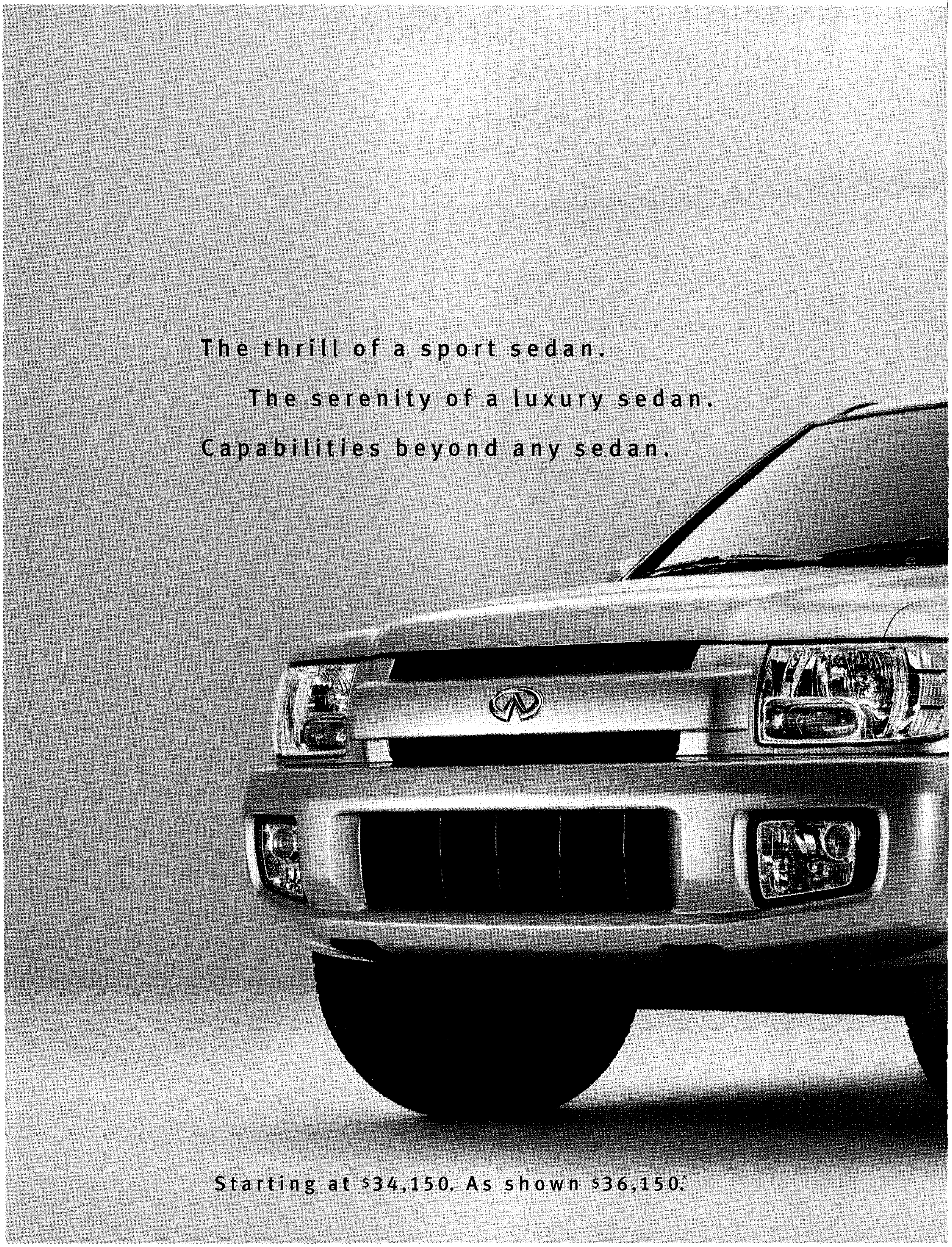

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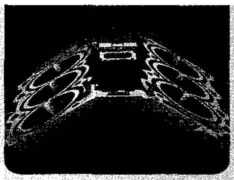

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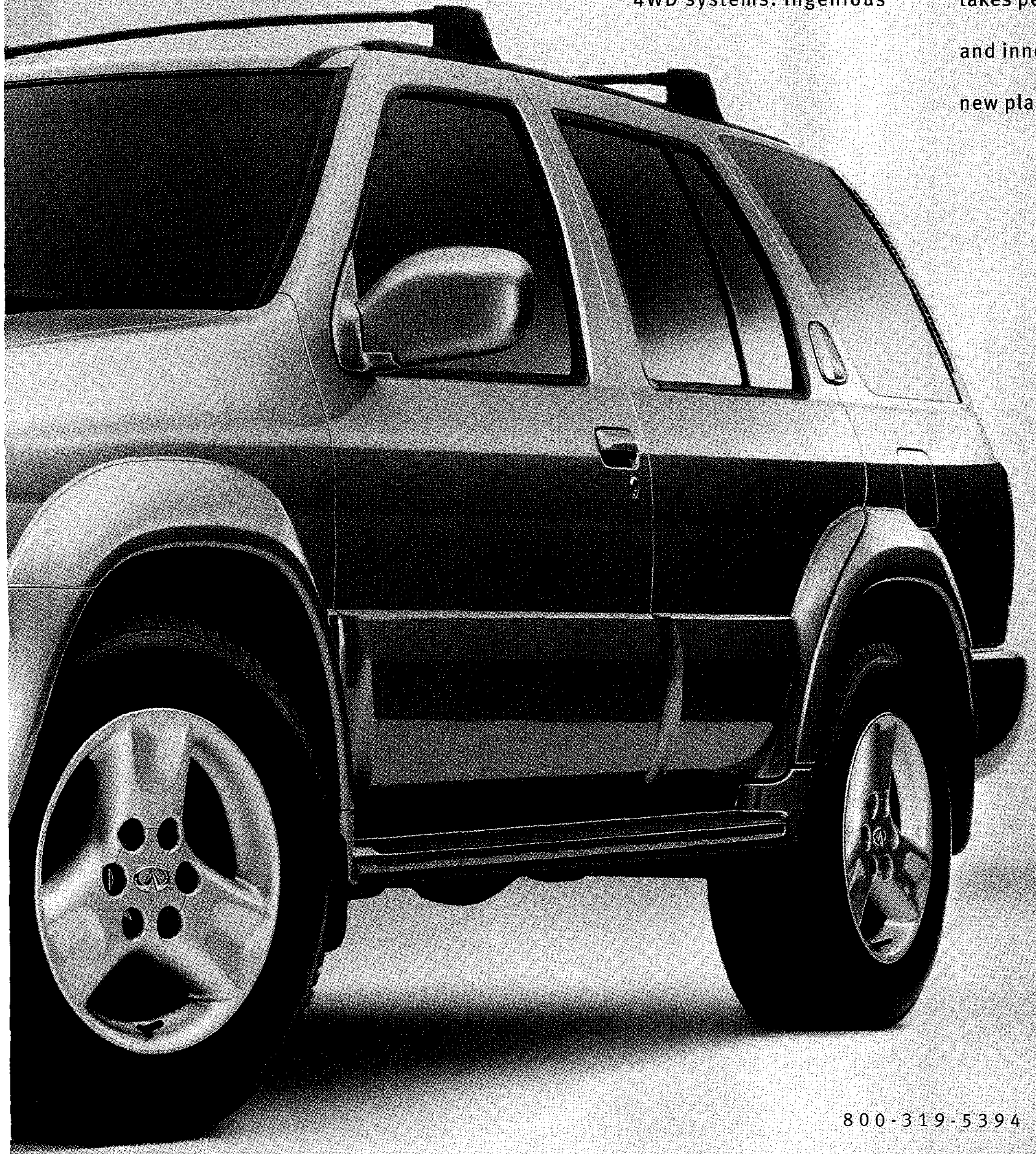

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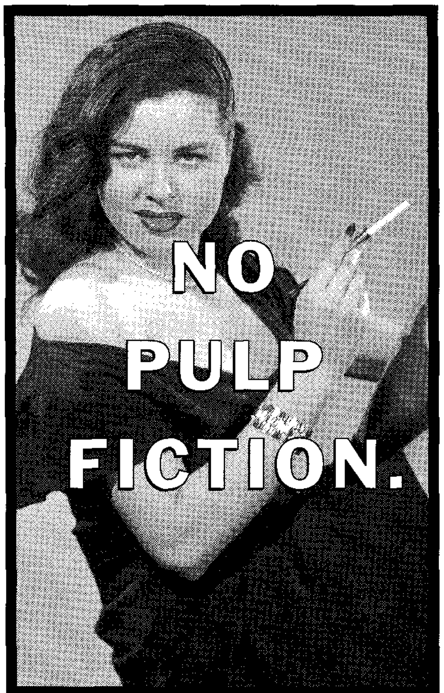

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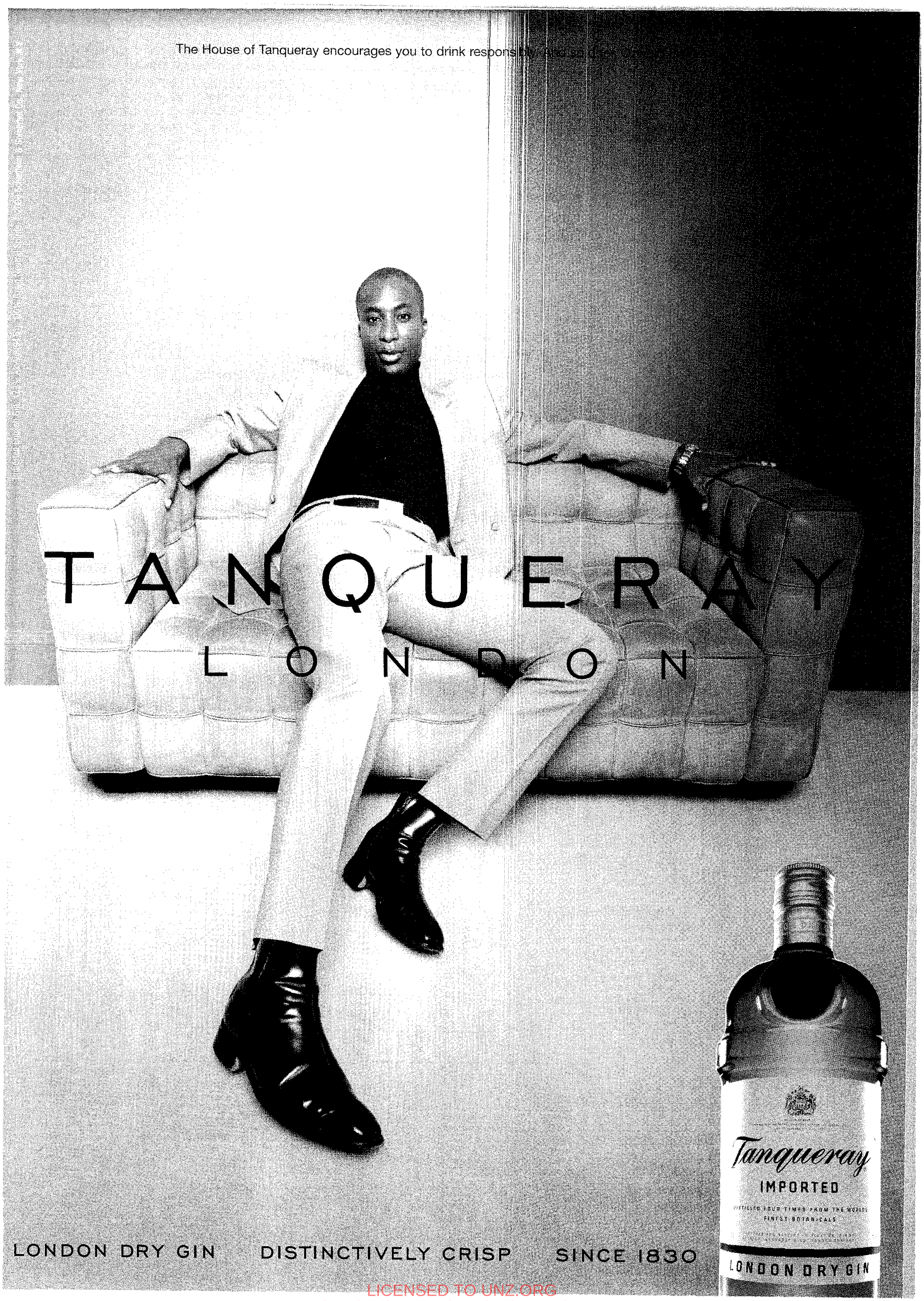
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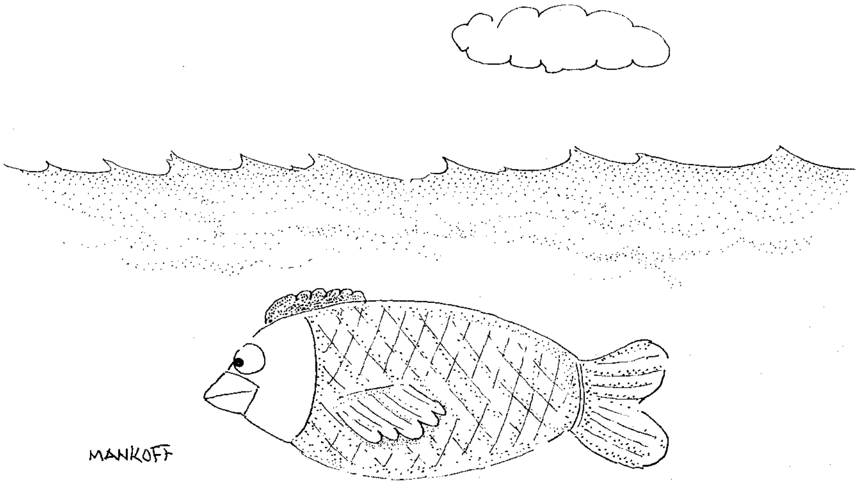
Ben Katchor (Sketchbook, p. 70) has been a contributor since 1993. His fourth book, "The Beauty Supply District," was published in June. ♦



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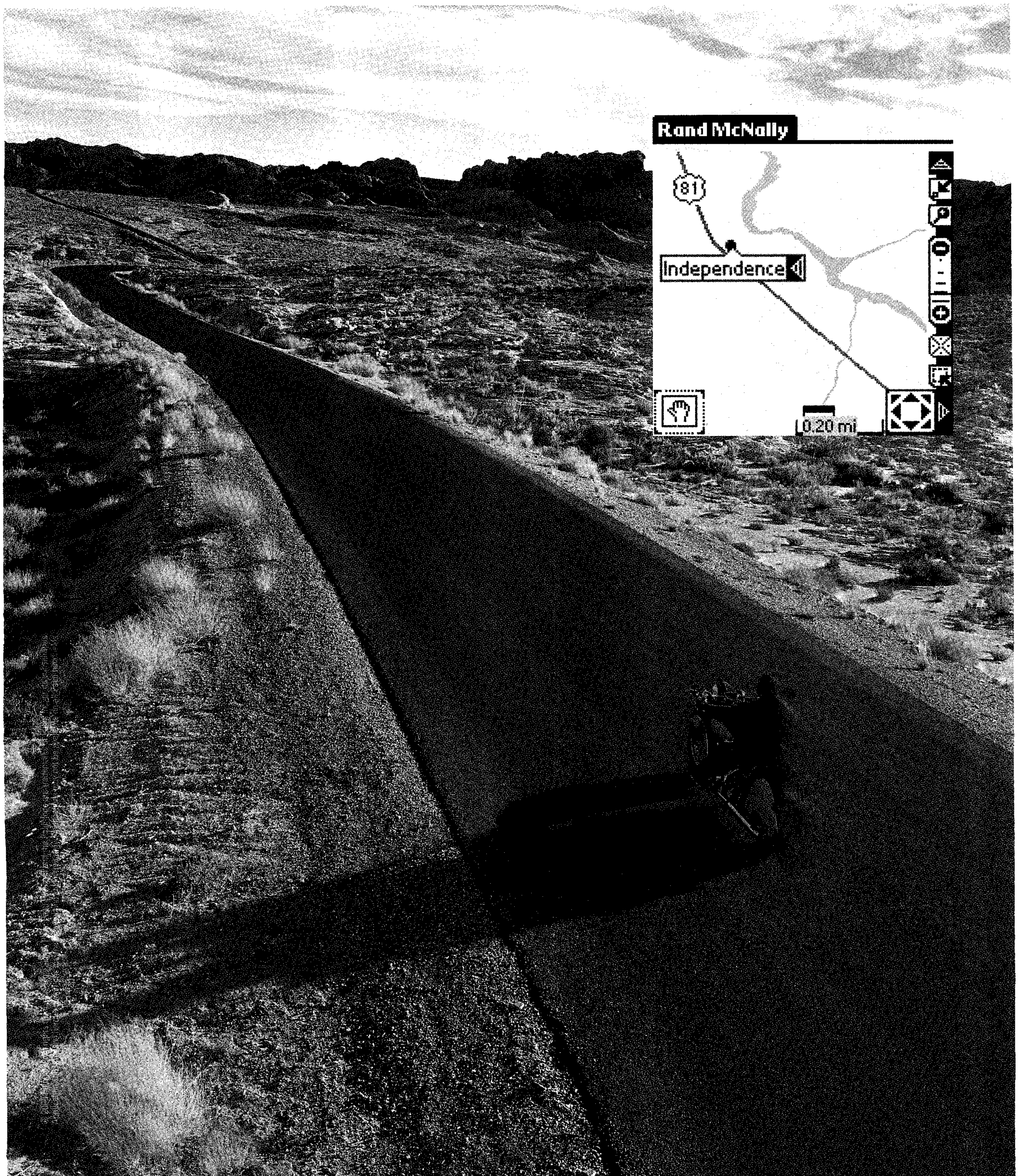
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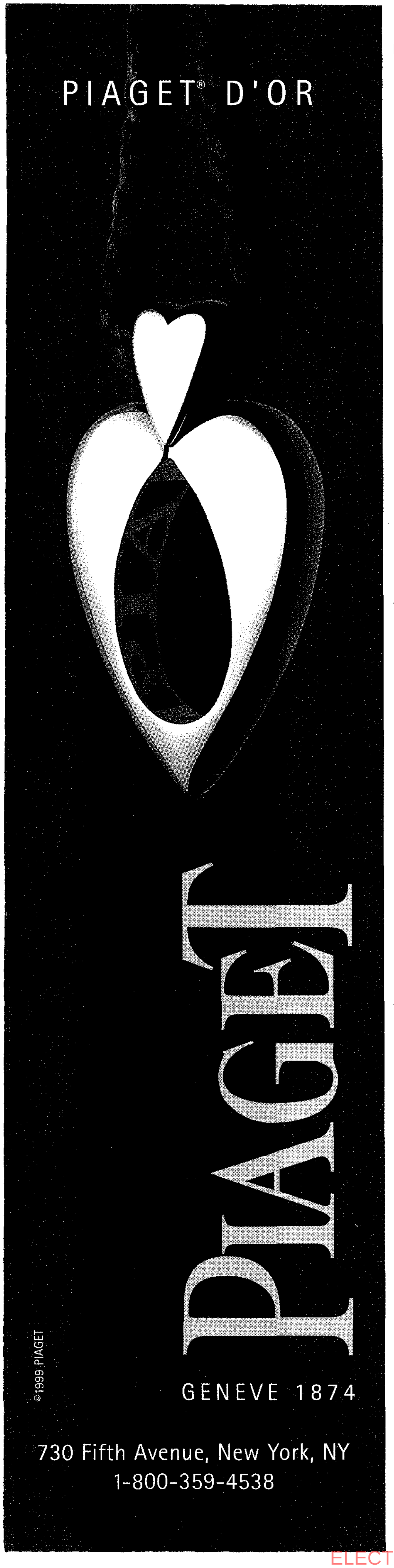

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REMEMBERING BILL CLINTON

Bill Clinton is certainly a clever operator, but Joe Klein doesn't acknowledge how hollow his victories have been ("Eight Years," October 16th & 23rd). When Clinton took office, his Party controlled both houses of Congress and most of the state legislatures. The Republicans, portrayed by the media as history's angry losers, have managed, on Clinton's watch, to move into the dominant position in American electoral politics. And now, as the final act, Clinton's handpicked heir may be defeated by the lightweight Bush. Clinton's legacy is not at stake in this election; he has already lost.
Mark Richard
Worthington, Ohio

Why does President Clinton try, by implication, to blame General Colin Powell for his first foreign-policy fiasco—the "nation building" interlude in Somalia that cost the lives of American G.I.s—rather than admit that he was unable to develop, let alone articulate, a clear strategy once Powell left? Whom will he hold responsible for his failure to follow up effectively on the Oslo accords and for the collapse of the Middle East peace process—that woman, Monica Lewinsky? Clinton has visited more countries than any other President, but orchestrating photo ops is not an effective way to conduct international affairs. Historians will see past the image that Clinton has built; for now, Klein was too kind.
Dick Abb
Appleton, Wis.

Reading Klein's article, I could not help thinking how like a classic hero Clinton is. Everything about such people is big—their loves, their eagerness to do spectacular things, their deep understanding of how the world works, and also their moral failings and their need to win. Clinton's enemies never grasped this; they measured him according to their own smallness. The rest of us, meanwhile, are already beginning to suffer withdrawal pangs. We feel lucky that we shared our time with him, and a little sad knowing that someone like him probably won't pass our way again. At least, not in the next four years.
Batya Dagan
Los Angeles, Calif.

SCHOOL CHOICES

Elizabeth Kolbert underestimates urban parents when she suggests that they choose charter schools like those my company manages solely for the safety and order they offer ("Unchartered Territory," October 9th). And she gives us insufficient credit when she comments that all but one of the people she met in our office were white, without also noting that twenty-nine per cent of our managers are people of color. But, most important, she fails to recognize what our students have accomplished. With the help of a strong curriculum, they have made significant academic gains. Our hope is that more children can benefit from the high aspirations we have for them.
Steven Wilson
C.E.O., Advantage Schools
Boston, Mass.

When Steven Wilson says that poor students have different "needs" from those of the children of the rich, he takes a simple truth to an ugly extreme. Yes, different children have different needs, but all share the same basic requirements of love, guidance, safety, and room to grow. Advantage Schools may meet more of these needs than troubled urban schools, but affluent suburban schools generally meet them all. As Kolbert points out, it is hard to fault urban parents for choosing the lesser of two evils; we can, however, fault ourselves for allowing that to be their only choice.
Josh Rothschild
Bloomington, Ind.

•

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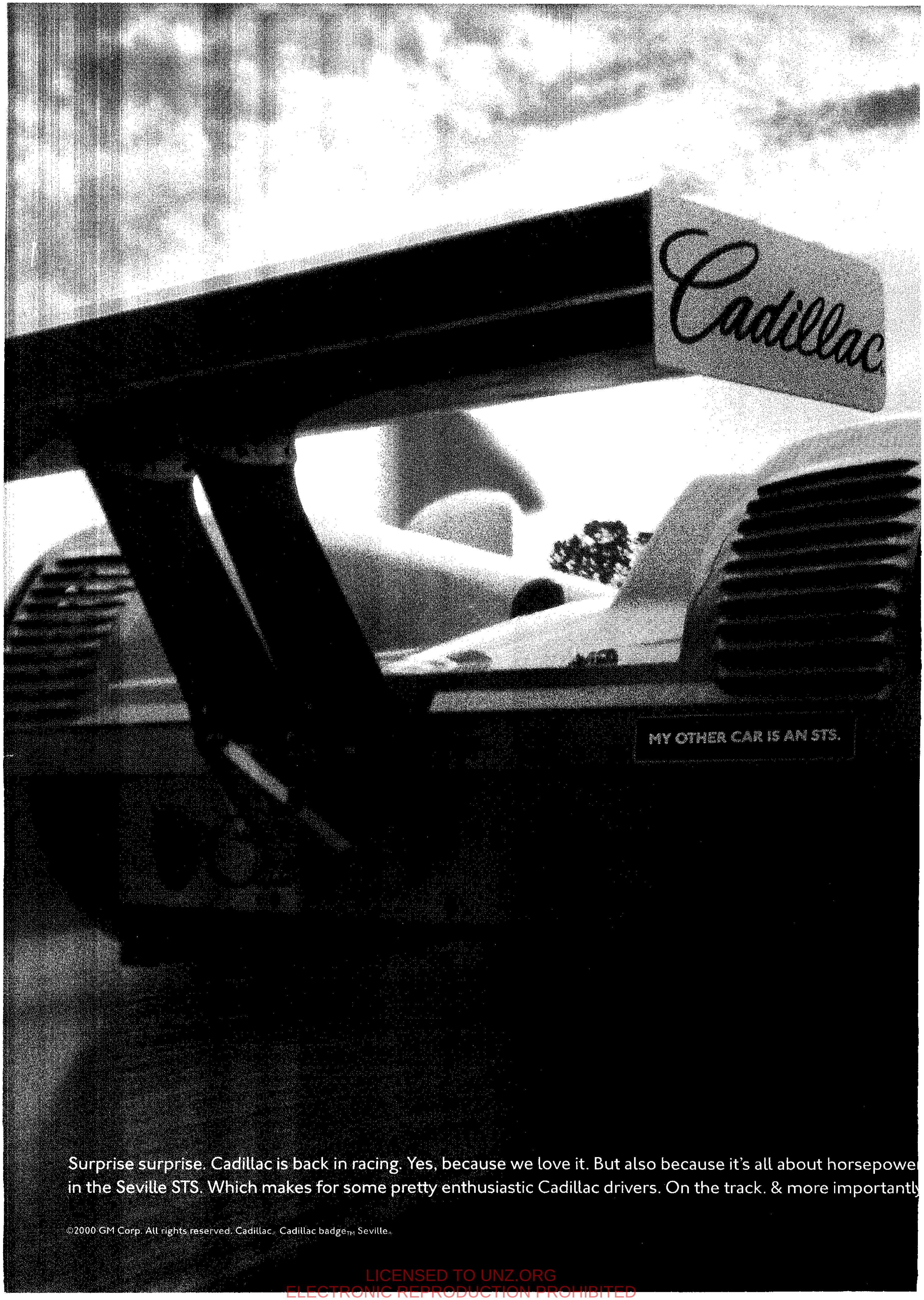

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graffiti, plunder, a reconstructed longboat, and a Norse penny, and a variety of dioramas. Through Jan. 21. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—A retrospective devoted to Lee Krasner ends its national tour in the artist's birthplace. Through Jan. 7. ♦ **"Hip-Hop Nation: Roots, Rhymes, and Rage"** presents videos, clothing and accessories, manuscripts of lyrics, F.B.I. letters, magazine covers, and installations that catalogue reactions to the genre. Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"Gold of the Nomads: Scythian Treasures from Ancient Ukraine."** Through Jan. 21. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY
29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)—**"Ruskin's Italy, Ruskin's England"** offers a veritable yard sale of drawings, paintings, and manuscripts by the Victorian polymath and his contemporaries, among them Turner, Rossetti, Millais, and Kate Greenaway. Highlights include some of Ruskin's own exquisite architectural studies for "The Stones of Venice," along with a late draft of the book's opening page—surely one of the most beautiful passages of English prose. For the more gossip-minded, letters by family members detail the gradual dissolution of Ruskin's marriage. Most melancholy and dramatic, however, are the journal entries Ruskin wrote late in life, when he had already begun to suffer from extended mental breakdowns. The final nearly illegible note reads like a passage from Poe or King: "Horror. Worst horror I ever knew. The Bird. The Beak—how Grand." Through Jan. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5; Fridays, 10:30 to 8; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (864-4500)—Isaac Julien's split-screen video projection is a meditation on the secret life of the Soane Museum, in London. There is no narrative and no dialogue, but Julien populates the exquisite nineteenth-century interiors with an enigmatic cast, of which Sir John Soane (who made his fortune from Colonial investments) is the sole white character. Other players include a modern-day conservator (her Agnès B. jacket is a dead giveaway), a pair of young women in Colonial gowns, and a peripatetic male dancer. Before turning to film, Julien studied painting; his gifts as a colorist are evident in the crimsons, blues, and golds that saturate the screen. The kaleidoscopic scene, with its doublings and mirror images, is so mesmerizing that its intimations of race and class relations seem like seductive whispers. Through Jan. 7. (Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 6; Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

PHYLLIS BRAMSON
This show's title, "Opulent Flim Flam," is unwisely close to home. Bramson's paintings, which incorporate Eastern images of women and sex along with collage, beads, and delicate decorative objects, are certainly opulent and easily mistaken for fluff. The artist says her work addresses "being a bumptious and bad mannered thing," a phrase that reveals the pleasure she takes in self-expression, coquetry, and independence, and these qualities are clear in her work as well. Whether viewers appreciate it may depend on their interest in conversing, visually, in shades of pink and gold, with bumptious things. Through Nov. 11. (Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 980-2323.)

JOHN DUBROW
During a recent stay in Israel, the sober young realist painter painted five large landscapes: two are Tel Aviv street scenes, crowded with awnings, parked cars, and pedestrians. The other three

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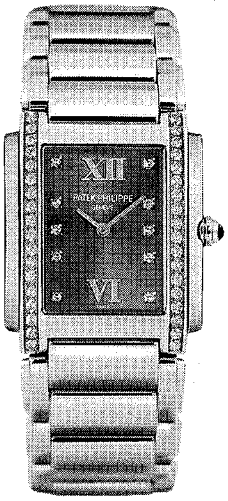

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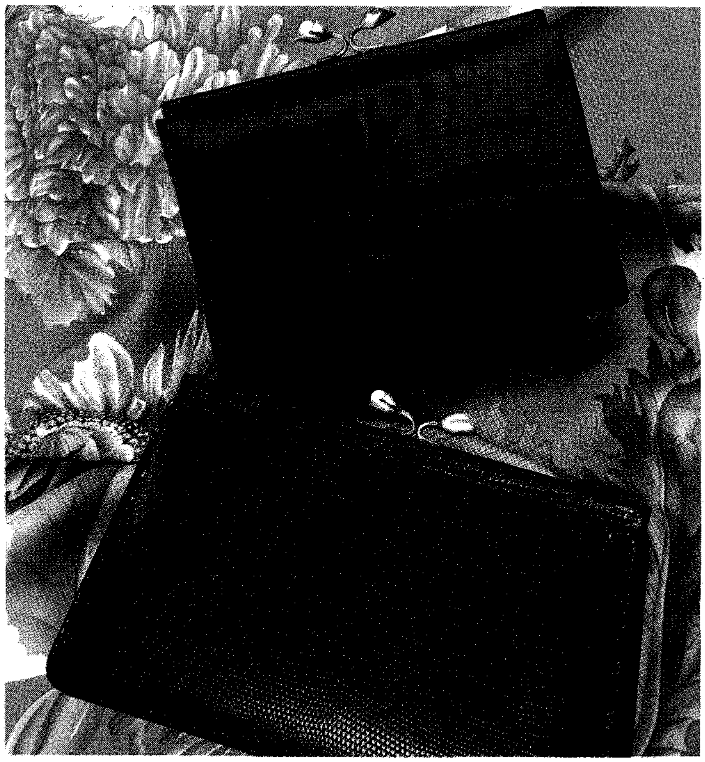

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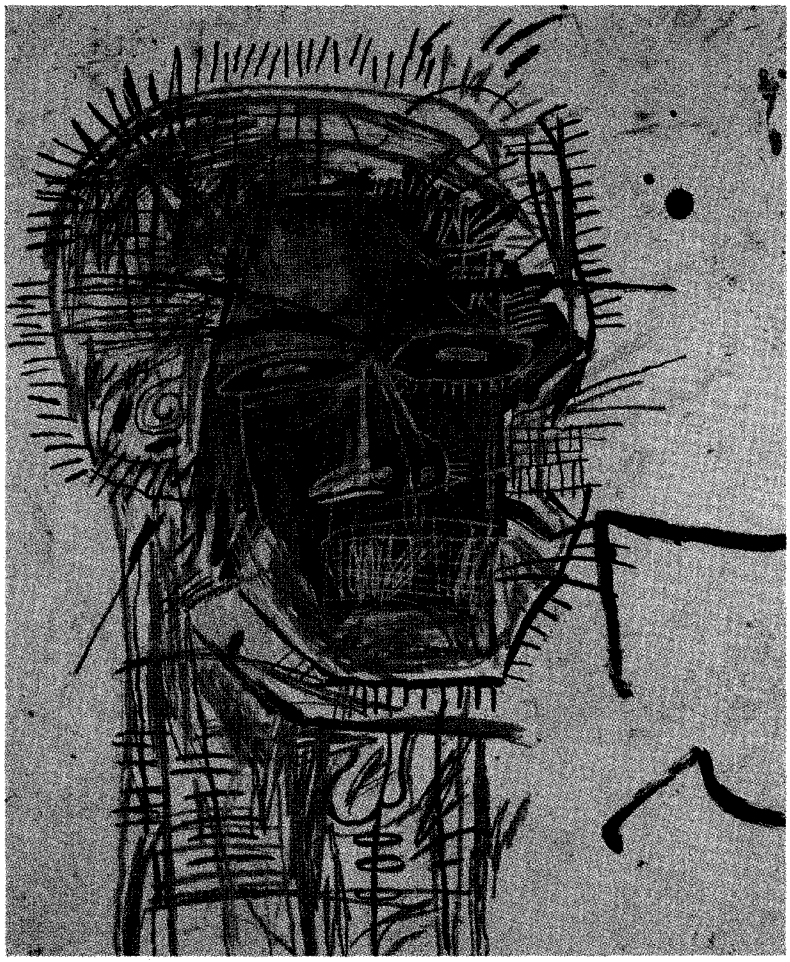

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GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—One design icon salutes another: the museum devotes its spiralling interior court to an exhibition that measures the impact of Giorgio Armani, the original relaxed-fit couturier. Through Jan. 10. ♦ **"Amazons of the Avant-Garde"** is a modest survey of six women painters, each of whom played a vital role in the evolution of the Russian jeunesse dorée. Through Jan. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The museum presents the first full-scale retrospective in forty years devoted to the photographer Edward Steichen. Through Feb. 4. ♦ **"Lovely Life: The Recent Work of Agnes Martin."** Through Oct. 29. ♦ **"Roni Horn: Still Water (The River Thames, for Example), 1999."** Through Jan. 14. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—**"Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga"** marks the millennial anniversary of the Viking North American landing with an exhibition of such artifacts as

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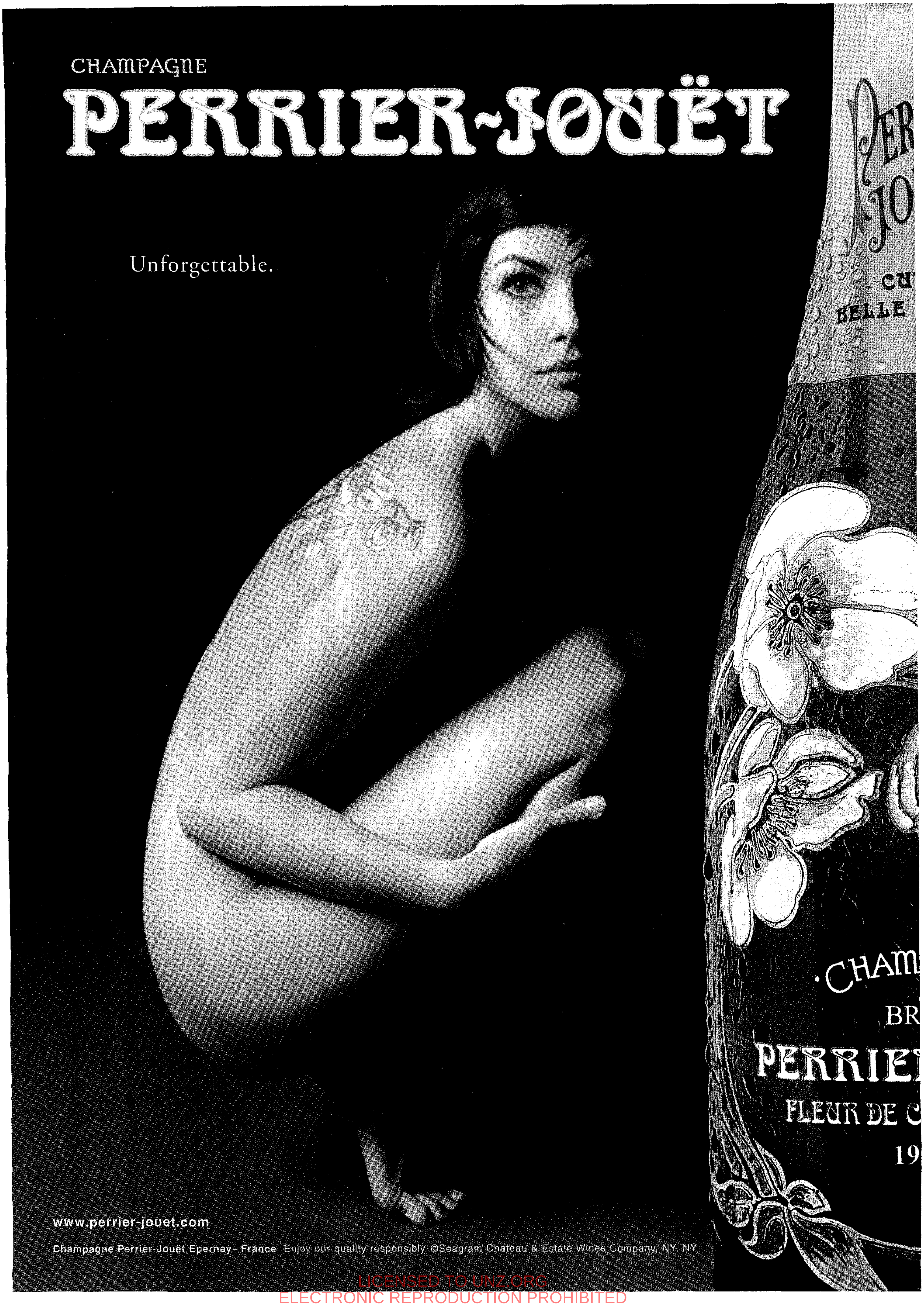
TABLES FOR TWO

SANDWICH PLANET
534 Ninth Ave. (273-9768)—If you crave a really good sandwich, New York can feel like a stranded lifeboat—"gourmet" delis everywhere, but not a bite to eat. Consider yourself rescued. This tomato-red lunchroom—not much larger than a minivan, it's nestled among fish markets and kung-fu video stores a few blocks from the Lincoln Tunnel—is like an obsessive sandwich museum. The bearded, bespectacled owner, Will Brown, understands the primordial appeal of the great nineteenth-century invention, and he's assiduously studied the right way to make more than a hundred kinds (he also cooks his own ham, turkey, and roast beef). The phone rings and rings during the course of an extended lunch hour, the door swings open again and again, and brown to-go bags pile up and disappear from a wobbly table stacked with Tupperware containers of cupcakes.

A large sign on the wall legitimately declares the food to be "damn good." You could, conceivably, eat here every day for a month and not hit a clinker. Along with the truly mind-tripping variations on the one-course meal, there are good salads (the arugula is nothing but a pile of peppery leaves, served, like everything else, on a paper plate with plastic utensils), baked potatoes, tortilla and potato chips, and fajitas (which come regular or "big-ass"), but all that stuff is just decoration. Foremost are the juicy burgers and *churascos* (grilled chicken breasts). The thirty versions of these include the simple Derrick's, which is blackened and topped with pesto on ciabatta, and the more complex Acapulco, with roasted onions, jalapeños, garlic, and cilantro. You can order a fine tuna melt or Monte Cristo from the American and International Classics list, which also features a Hell's Kitchen cheese steak and a Ninth Avenue club. The cured-meat-and-cheese panini are built on a foundation of great breads (the crispy, flat pizza bianco is best), but they tend to become overpowering in an effort to live up to their names (the Pope, the Vesuvius, and the Sopranos, for instance). (Open Mondays through Saturdays, from noon to 9:30. Sandwiches $4-$8.)

—*Emily Nunn*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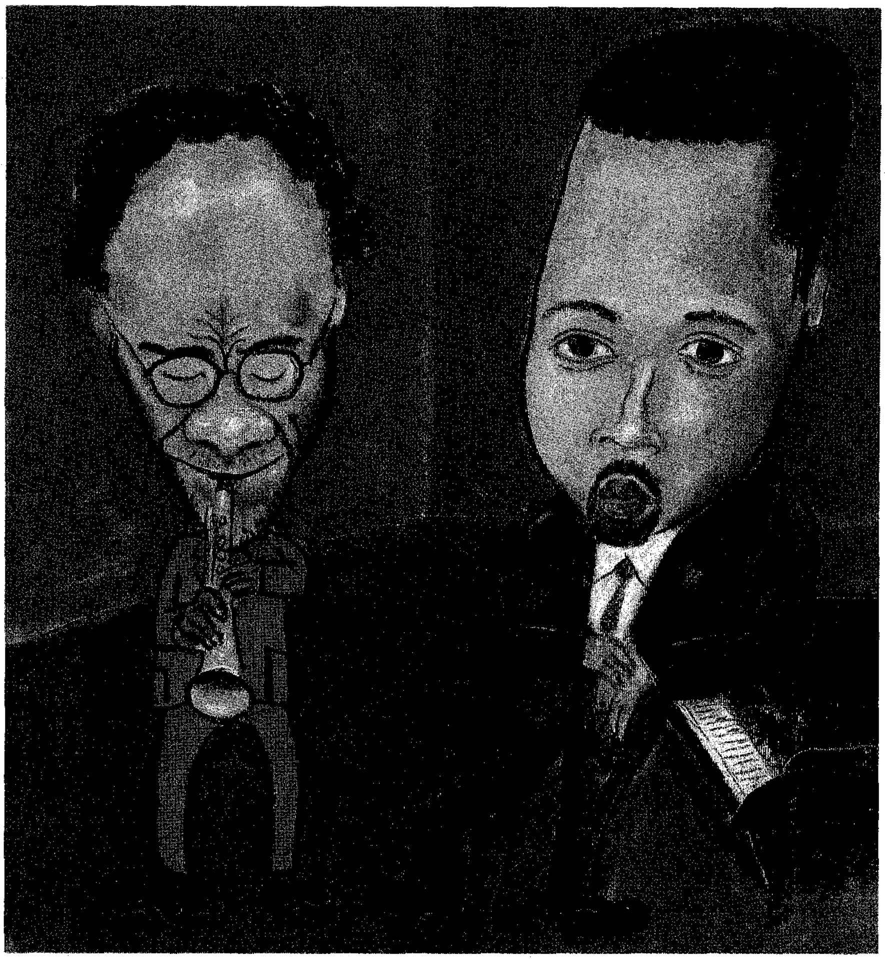
calypso singer, which began with early victories over such fellow-singers as Roaring Lion and Attilla the Hun in the carnival competitions in Port of Spain. But Kitchener was also a noted composer for the steel drum, and this evening's performers include one of Trinidad and Tobago's leading pan ensembles, **Panazz,** the steel-drum player **Andy Narell** along with Kitchener's son **Kernel Roberts,** and the historian and calypso singer **Dr. Hollis Chalkdust Liverpool.** (Whitman Theater, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Nov. 4 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BAM CAFÉ
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4139)—Nov. 3: **Gary Lucas,** the guitarist from the cult outfit Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band, is revered by a small but fiercely devoted following, in part because of his technical skill and in part because of his adventurous tastes. Tonight, he will perform music by Chow Hsuan and Bai Kwong, two Chinese pop stars from the thirties and fifties.



Sam Rivers and Eric Reed, premièring new work at Lincoln Center.

AHMET GÖRGÜN

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Nov. 1: The former Dinosaur Jr. guitarist **J. Mascis** stops by with his latest band, the Fog. Nov. 2: The enduring and lovable outfit **They Might Be Giants** plays here each Thursday in November. Nov. 3-4: **Soulive** performs in dark suits that are as sharp as its Hammond-organ-driven retro jazz and funk. With **Robert Walter's 20th Congress,** a new band led by the Greyboy Allstars keyboardist, on the 3rd.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Nov. 3-5: Like the forlorn songs of his equally gifted colleague Freedy Johnston, **Ron Sexsmith's** work is exquisite yet unfashionable. His 1999 CD, "Whereabouts," was a subtle gem from start to finish, but its charms were lost on the people who hold the purse strings, and Sexsmith was dropped from his label, Interscope. Here he's introducing material from his currently homeless, brand-new, Steve Earle-produced record. Nov. 6: **Badly Drawn Boy** is Damon Gough, a British slacker troubadour who is enjoying a moment's celebrity at home: his latest release, "The Hour of Bewilderbeast," recently won the prestigious Mercury Prize for best album.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The vocalist **Susannah McCorkle,** here through Nov. 25, knows how to be sophisticated without making a big deal about it. Literate and knowledgeable about the history of her art, she takes her audience on a jazz-inflected stroll through the past seventy years of American popular song. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Nov. 5: You've got to give it up for **Earl Klugh** for holding on to the acoustic guitar as his main axe for some thirty years now. His music has a certain fern-bar mellowness, but at least he's not one of those speed-demon players who aim to make the guitar sound like a nest of hornets trapped in a jar.

FEZ
380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Nov. 3-5: **Anita O'Day.** She was the girl singer for the Gene Krupa Band back in the early forties and the inspiration for Sugarpuss O'Shea, Barbara Stanwyck's slang-slinging, tough-talking character in the 1942 film "Ball of Fire." At eighty-six, she's still singing her old standbys (if she feels like it), though her bright, flat sound is on the muted side these days. But her sense of timing, which was always her greatest asset, is as sure as it ever was, and her unvarnished style is terrifically watchable and enlivening. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRIDIUM
48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 5: The **Pat Martino** trio. His iconic stature now firmly established, this sleek and thoughtful guitarist has refined the knowledge and experience gained over four decades into a signature sound soaked with poetry. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

KNICKERBOCKER
33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Nov. 1-4: A primed trio led by pianist **Steve Kuhn,** a well-seasoned veteran who's backed Art Farmer and Sheila Jordan, among many others, and carved out a sturdy solo career as a distinguished, if too often underpraised, modern stylist. The bassist **David Finck** and the drummer **Billy Drummond** are his particularly intuitive rhythm mates. Dining.

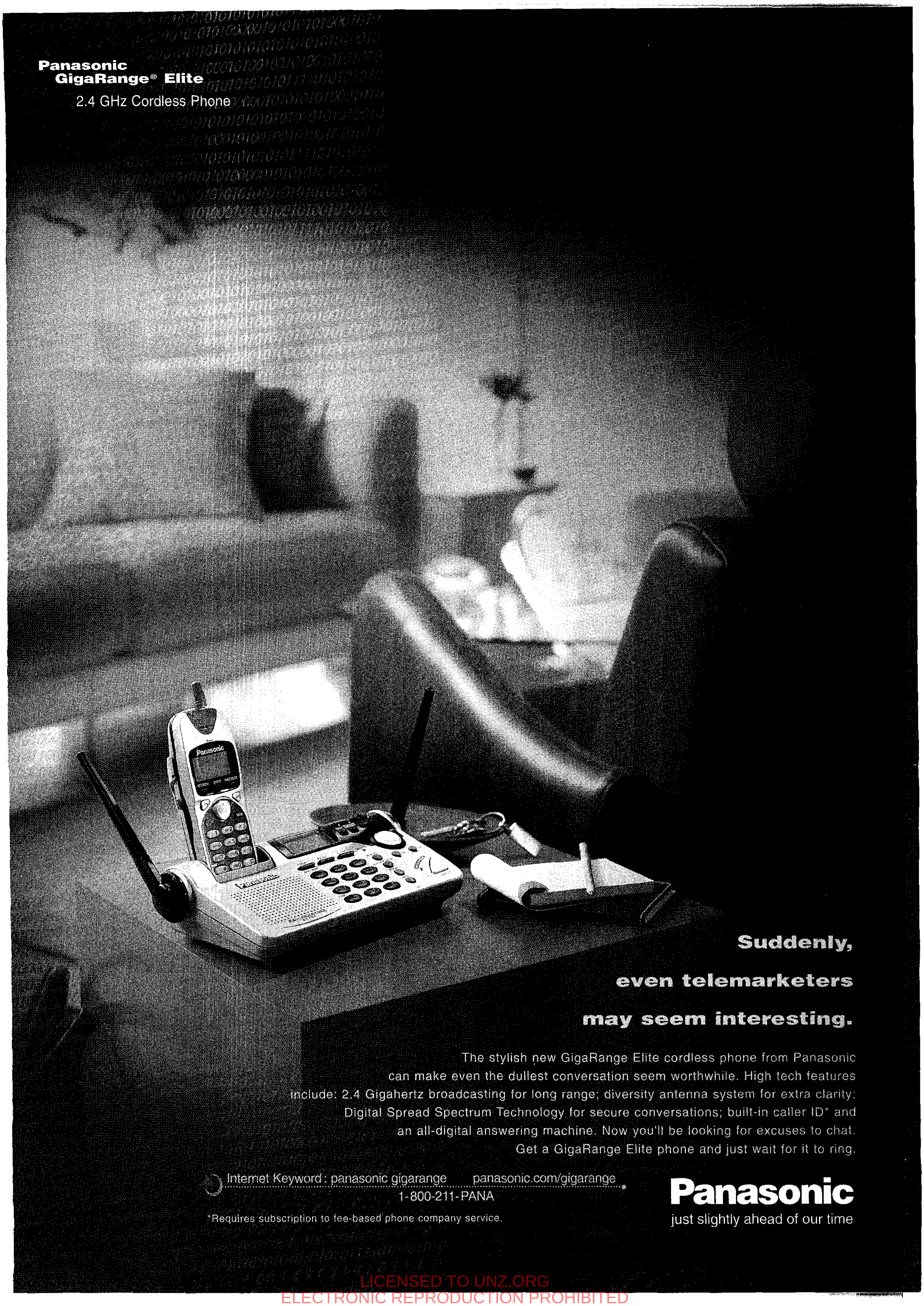
TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Nov. 2-4: **Cecil Taylor** and **Tony Oxley** in a duo setting. Any drummer who goes one-on-one with the prodigious pianist Taylor had better have the resources and the stamina to keep up with the seventy-year-old, perennially avant-garde dynamo. Oxley, long a maverick figure on the British jazz scene, and an occasional Taylor partner in recent years, is the right man for the job.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Nov. 5: The **Eric Alexander** quartet. With a spacious tone and ever-present energy, the hard-bop tenor saxophonist Alexander has made a name for himself in the short time since he relocated from Chicago. This is his Vanguard début—a momentous occasion in the career of any jazz musician. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"The Year One: Art of the Ancient World East and West,"** a selection of antiquities from the permanent collection, all of which were created around 1 A.D. Through Jan. 14. ♦ **"Art and the Empire City"** presents paintings, photographs, and decorative art from one of New York's early periods of irrational exuberance, between the completion of the Erie Canal, in 1825, and the beginning of the Civil War, in 1861. Through Jan. 7. ♦ **"The Golden Deer of Eurasia: Scythian and Sarmatian Treasures from the Russian Steppes."** Through Feb. 4. ♦ **"The Divine Comtesse"** presents photographs, by Pierre-Louis Pierson, of the Countess de Castiglione (1837-99). Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"Queen Victoria and Thomas Sully"** gathers the oil portraits, oil sketches, drawings, and other ephemera connected with the preparation of the full-length portrait (also on view) by Sully, the British-born Philadelphia artist. Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—**"Open Ends,"** the third and final installment of **"MOMA 2000,"** the yearlong exhibition devoted to the art of the past century, covers art from 1960 to the present. Like its predecessors, the current show is itself divided into segments; this first one includes several large-scale works and installations, by Cai Guo-Qiang, James Rosenquist, Pipilotti Rist, Cindy Sherman, and Gerhard Richter, which suggests the themes that the later segments will amplify.



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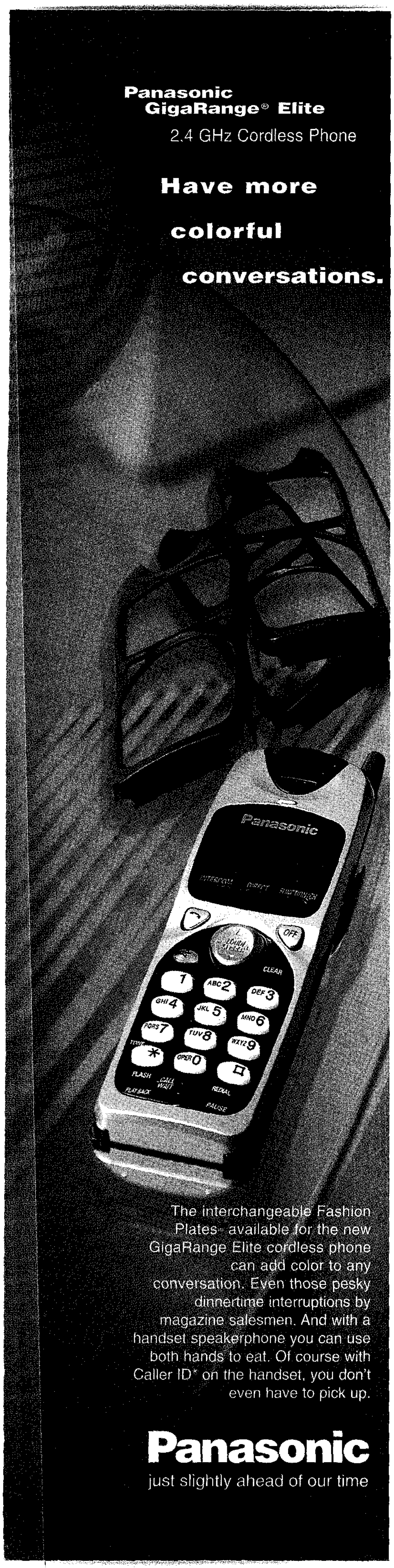

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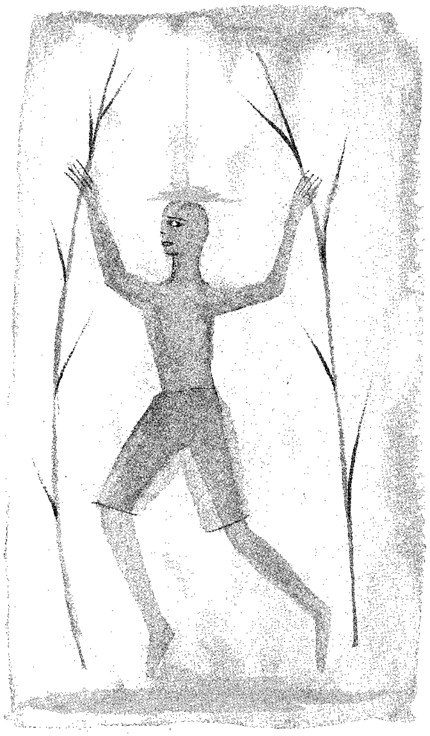
scapes that range from a meandering river to a Zen garden. The director and choreographer Lin Hwai-min, who excels in creating stunning imagery, has also employed the services of a holy man, who remains onstage in prayer while a stream of rice falls over him throughout the performance. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Nov. 1 and Nov. 3-4 at 7:30 and Nov. 5 at 3.)

GARTH FAGAN DANCE
The company marks its thirtieth year with a retrospective of sorts, with revivals, recent works, and a première. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 31-Nov. 3 at 8, Nov. 4 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 5 at 2 and 7:30.)

CORTEZ & CO. CONTEMPORARY BALLET
The ten-member troupe, under the direction of former Paul Taylor dancer Hernando Cortez, presents three programs of premières and repertory works by Cortez. Each evening includes the solo "A Moment More," danced by the New York City Ballet principal Nikolaj Hübbe. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 2-5 at 8:30.)

WHIRLING DERVISHES OF TURKEY
The Sufi Mevlevi order of religious dancers from Konya, Turkey, performs their meditative devotions with musical accompaniment from a group of musicians on the *ney*, oud, tanbur, and drums, while the vocalist Kani Karaca recites passages from the poetry of Rumi. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 545-7536. Nov. 3 at 8.)



"Songs of the Wanderers," by the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, at BAM.

ORESTE ZEVOLA

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

DENNIS DE YOUNG
During Styx's peak, twenty years ago, the group offered American audiences a homegrown alternative to the Dungeons & Dragons histrionics of such English art-rock bands as Yes and Emerson, Lake and Palmer. Much of the band's pretension was due to the keyboard and larynx of DeYoung, who specialized in baroque arpeggios and falsetto power ballads like "Lady," "Babe," and "Come Sail Away." DeYoung left the group in 1984 for a solo career that's included writing a musical version of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and taking the stage as Pilate for the Broadway revival of "Jesus Christ Superstar." His career has also included litigation: he's currently suing his former bandmates, who have decided to tour as Styx without him, for "damaging this beautiful thing that we created." Here he does his part to save his reputation with a program of Styx classics, Gershwin standards, and his own musical-theatre songs, backed by a fifty-piece orchestra. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Nov. 1 at 8.)

DON BYRON
One man wrote "Moon River," the other "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)." One has won a slew of Academy Awards, the other played at Woodstock. Both lived in Los Angeles and both played piano. No, there's really not much linking Henry Mancini and Sly Stone, but if anyone can find connections between these two very different American composers, it's Byron, the eclectic clarinettist, who is premièring his composition "Contrasting Brilliance: The Music of Henry Mancini and Sly Stone." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Nov. 3 at 8.)

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
Eric Reed, considered by many to be one of the brightest jewels in the Wynton Marsalis crown, is a lively, gospel-tinged pianist whose work has enlivened Marsalis's own ensemble as well as the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. But Reed has been stepping out of the sideman role for some time now, and with the major commission "The Word of God" he makes an ambitious leap, presenting a spiritually based opus that includes the vocalist Roberta Gumbel and a gospel choir. **Sam Rivers**, who is also performing new material, has been going his own way for some six decades now; every time you think you've got this significant multi-instrumentalist and composer pegged he wriggles free from your expectations. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Nov. 3-4 at 8.)

ANI DI FRANCO
Just thirty years old, DiFranco recently released her thirteenth record, "Swing Set," a thirty-minute collection of takes and remakes which includes a terrific reading of Bob Dylan's "Hurricane." "Swing Set" may be a short disk, but it's further proof that this Buffalo-born folkie with a punk heart is still the music business's preëminent D.I.Y. entrepreneur. DiFranco carves out a profitable and wildly popular career by running her own label, Righteous Babe, without the help of any of the major record companies. And the fact that she can pack the house at one of New York's major venues says a lot about her broad appeal. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Nov. 3-5 at 8.)

"CAVESTOMP! 2000: THE GARAGE ROCK FESTACULAR"
Back in the mid-sixties, inspired by such British Invasion bands as the Beatles, the Kinks, and the Rolling Stones, aspiring teen-age musicians cranked up their amplifiers, grew out their hair, and created the short-lived but influential genre named for the suburban rehearsal spaces from which the unholy sound of exuberantly incompetent "Louie, Louie" covers emanated. Most of these bands never got out of their local cul-de-sac, but the **Blues Magoos** managed a No. 5 hit in 1967 with "(We Ain't Got) Nothin' Yet." The band reunites for the first time in thirty-three years on Nov. 3. ♦ Garage rock's three-chord structure, adolescent fury, and raw delivery presaged the punk revolution of the seventies, and no band had more success with this than the **Troggs**, who had a No. 1 hit in 1966 with "Wild Thing." The British band returns to New York City for the first time in more than twenty-five years on Nov. 4. ♦ The same year the Troggs hit it big, **Syndicate of Sound** had its only chart success with the testosterone-drenched rocker "Little Girl." The San Jose quintet closes out the festival on Nov. 5. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. All shows at 8.)

TRIBUTE TO LORD KITCHENER
Lord Kitchener came into the world as Aldwyn Roberts, the son of a Trinidadian blacksmith, in April of 1922 and died this past February. Over the course of his long life, he became known as the Grand Master for his uncontested brilliance as a

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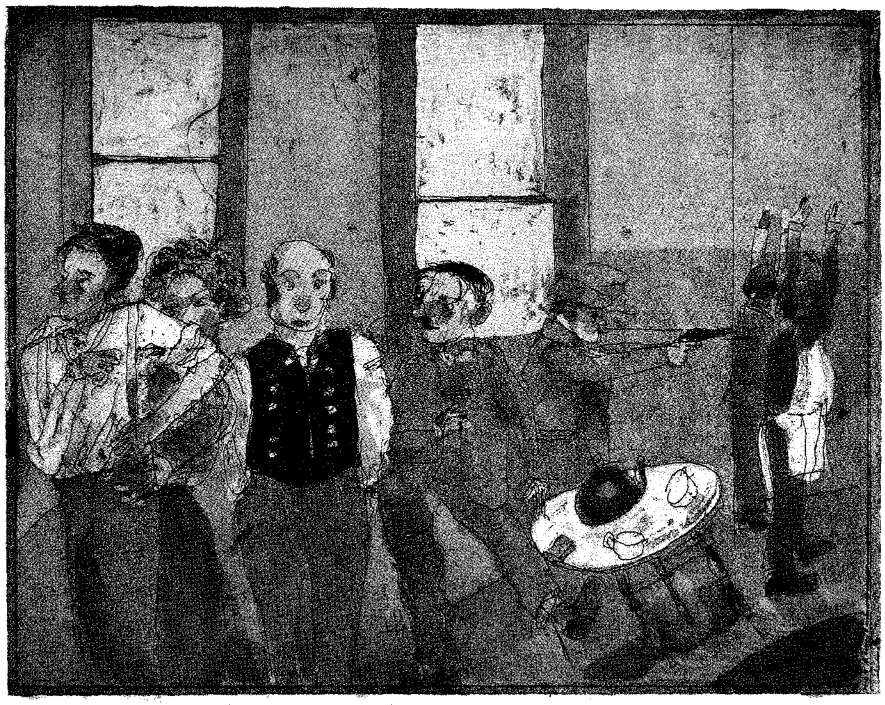
patory sequences, though, are surprisingly entertaining, if only because they involve laughing at the contestants (at a recent show, a professional woman defined a gynephobe as a person who is afraid of giants). (45 Bleecker, at 45 Bleecker St. 307-4100.)

GORE VIDAL'S THE BEST MAN
Gore Vidal's sophisticated, elegant, and damned entertaining 1960 play about the politics of politics, whose mots are as eerily accurate for Shrub and Al as they were, originally, for Adlai and Tricky Dick. Rather than a satire, the play is a comedy of manners (or, rather, of bad political manners) which shares with the eighteenth century an obsession with façade—its invention, manipulation, and exposure. Starring Charles Durning, Spalding Gray, Chris Noth, Elizabeth Ashley, Christine Ebersole, and Michael Learned, among others. Directed by Ethan McSweeny. (10/2/00) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)



The Roundabout Theatre Company's staging of "Juno and the Paycock."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

THE GOREY DETAILS
A musical inspired by the works of the author-illustrator Edward Gorey. With a score by Peter Matz and direction by Daniel Levans. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

HIGHWAY TO TOMORROW
Elevator Repair Service's latest show, based on Euripides' "Bacchae," incorporates choreography, found-object puppets, Afro-pop, and recorded sound effects. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., at Spring St. 647-0202.)

THE HOSTAGE
From the Irish Rep, Brendan Behan's 1958 black comedy, in which a British soldier is held captive by a former I.R.A. commander. Directed by Charlotte Moore. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK
Sean O'Casey's 1924 comitragedy, in a Roundabout Theatre production. John Crowley is the director. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 777-4900.)

LES MIZRAHI
The fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi has an endearing and winning personality, which sets this new cabaret act—the first in a series at the Drama Dept.—aglow. But Mizrahi's mélange of songs, conversation, and sewing, as svelte as the designer's newly slender figure, has been staged and rehearsed to death by Richard Move. It's not until he moves into the house for a brief improvised interlude to dole out Rice Krispies treats that the audience gets to experience the real Mizrahi. If only the fashionista would realize he's much more entertaining when he's being, rather than playing, himself. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200.)

LIFEGAME
A show by the British troupe Improbable Theatre, in which a different onstage guest's life story becomes the basis of the improv drama each night. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

THE LIGHT OUTSIDE
From the Flea Theatre, a black domestic comedy by Kate Robins. (41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-2407. Closes Nov. 12.)

MARCEL MARCEAU
The silent Frenchman, performing solo and with his twelve-mime company. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Closes Nov. 12.)

THE MUSIC MAN
A delightful revival of Meredith Willson's 1957 musical, directed by Susan Stroman and starring Craig Bierko, who is making his Broadway début in the role of Professor Harold Hill. The show hits us with the simplicity and seamlessness of a perfect fairy tale, and it puts music in its proper place—right up there with all the other miracles of life. (5/22/00) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE
The Adobe Theatre Company's modern take on the Greek myth. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 4.)

PROOF
The Manhattan Theatre Club's staging of David Auburn's drama, starring Mary-Louise Parker, is reopening on Broadway. Daniel Sullivan is the director. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

RED ROSES AND PETROL
A woman in Dublin prepares for her husband's funeral and for the return of her children from England and America, in a drama by Joseph O'Connor. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 581-4125.)

STRANGER
In Craig Lucas's new play, two strangers with dicey pasts meet on a plane—a man fresh from a long prison term, who has given his life over to Jesus (David Strathairn), and a woman damaged by her liberal parents' neglect ("They just love their skis"), who has amply demonstrated her own capacity for doing damage (Kyra Sedgwick). Lucas has in the past memorably dramatized life's ambiguities, but the road he's taken here has led him into a thicket of dull incomprehensibility; the characters arrive at their destination at the end of the first act, but for the audience the entire play is a long trip to nowhere. Directed by Mark Brokaw. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303. Closes Nov. 19.)

THE SYRINGA TREE
A tour-de-force solo drama, written by and starring South African native and first-time playwright Pamela Gien, who gives an extraordinary performance in all twenty-three roles. It's a love story, really, about the strong, lasting bond between a white girl and her black nanny in South Africa. Told from the girl's point of view, the story starts when she is six, in 1965, and continues through the following twenty years of turbulent and violent upheavals over apartheid. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.)

TABLETOP
In Rob Ackerman's real-time comedy, a behind-the-scenes look at television-commercial making, a domineering director and his crew create a product shot of a drink called Fruit Freeze! (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

TALLULAH HALLELUJAH!
Tovah Feldshuh's engaging portrait of the stage-and-screen siren Tallulah Bankhead. Feldshuh, who also stars, has set the show in 1956, by which time Bankhead was well aware that she had turned herself into a joke in pursuit of her art. As the action opens, she's just flopped in a revival of "A Streetcar Named Desire"; nonetheless, she takes the stage at a U.S.O. benefit, where, as the evening goes on, she regales the audience with the lowdown on her life, several marvellous standards, and a bunch of charmingly dirty limericks. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

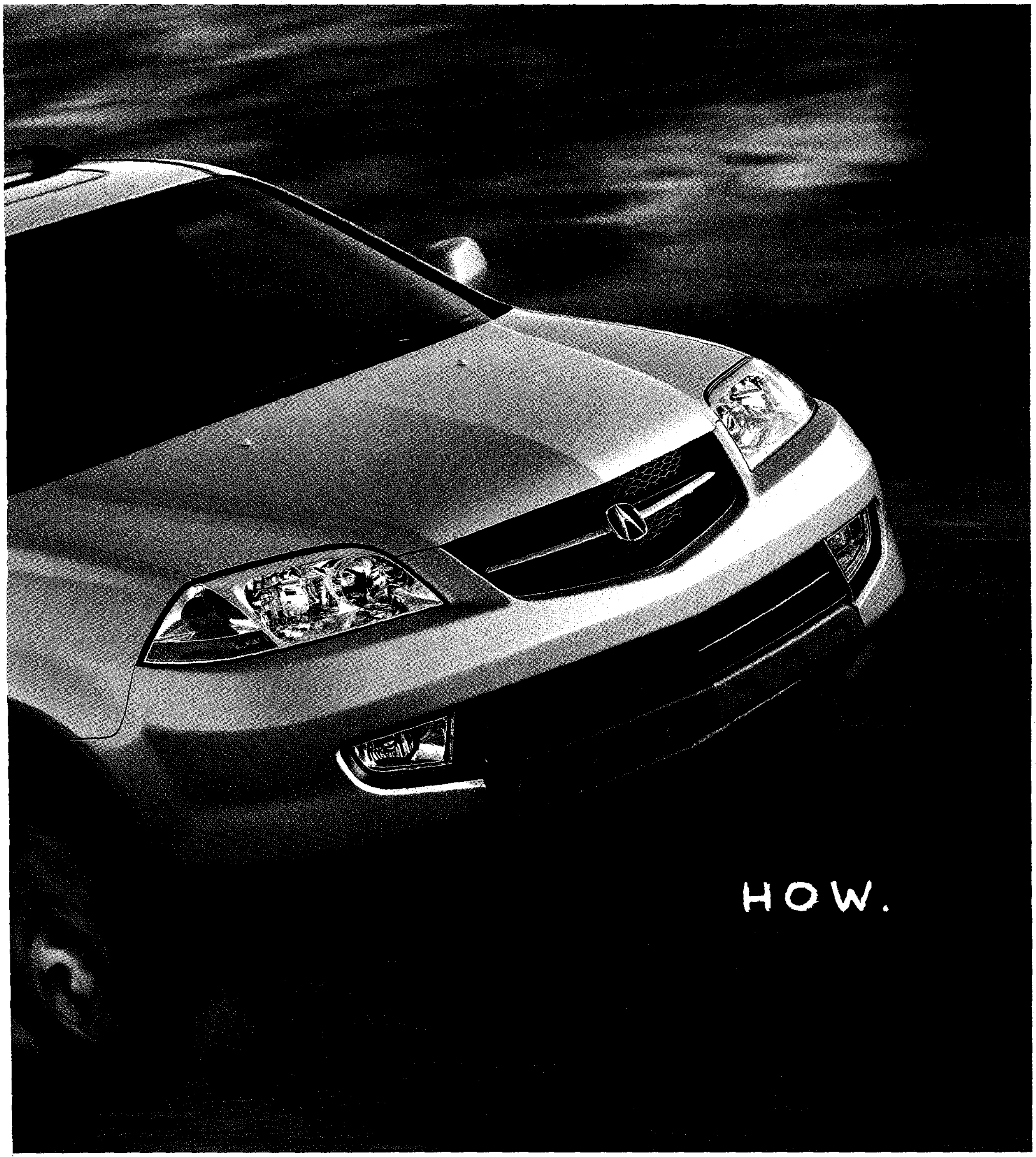
TEXTS FOR NOTHING
Samuel Beckett once referred to the prose works that are the basis of this solo play as "a dozen very short abortive texts." So it's not surprising that they turn out to be better read than said. Still, Bill Irwin (who adapted the show and stars in it) and the Classic Stage Company have given the author's fragmentary meditations on the nature of existence everything they've got. The set is a terrific, exitless mud hole into which Irwin's character is deposited at the outset, and Irwin's performance is precisely choreographed, down to the smallest facial movement—he even manages to look like Beckett, with an ill-fitting suit and black bowler. Despite the brilliance of the staging, the texts are unyielding; the net result is that the playwright has been turned into one of his own clowns. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210, ext. 10. Closes Nov. 6.)

THE UNEXPECTED MAN
Yasmina Reza's latest play. Matthew Warchus is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
Nov. 1 at 8: "Meadow," pas de deux from "Sleeping Beauty" and "Diana & Acteon," "Weren't We Fools?," and "Jabula." ♦ Nov. 2 at 8: "Jabula," "Prodigal Son," and "Études." ♦ Nov. 3 at 8: "Diversion of Angels," a pas de deux from "Diana & Acteon," "Meadow," and "Études." ♦ Nov. 4 at 2: "Theme & Variations," "Jardin aux Lilas," and the second act of "The Nutcracker." ♦ Nov. 4 at 8: "Theme & Variations," pas de deux from "Manon" and "Sleeping Beauty," and "Prodigal Son." ♦ Nov. 5 at 2: "Diversion of Angels," a pas de deux from "Manon," "Jardin aux Lilas," the Black Swan pas de deux, and the second act of "The Nutcracker." ♦ Nov. 5 at 7:30: "Theme & Variations," "Weren't We Fools?," "Meadow," and "Jabula." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

"SONGS OF THE WANDERERS"
The Taiwan-based Cloud Gate Dance Theatre presents an homage to spiritual journeys in a performance that requires four tons of rice, which the cast molds, from scene to scene, into new land-



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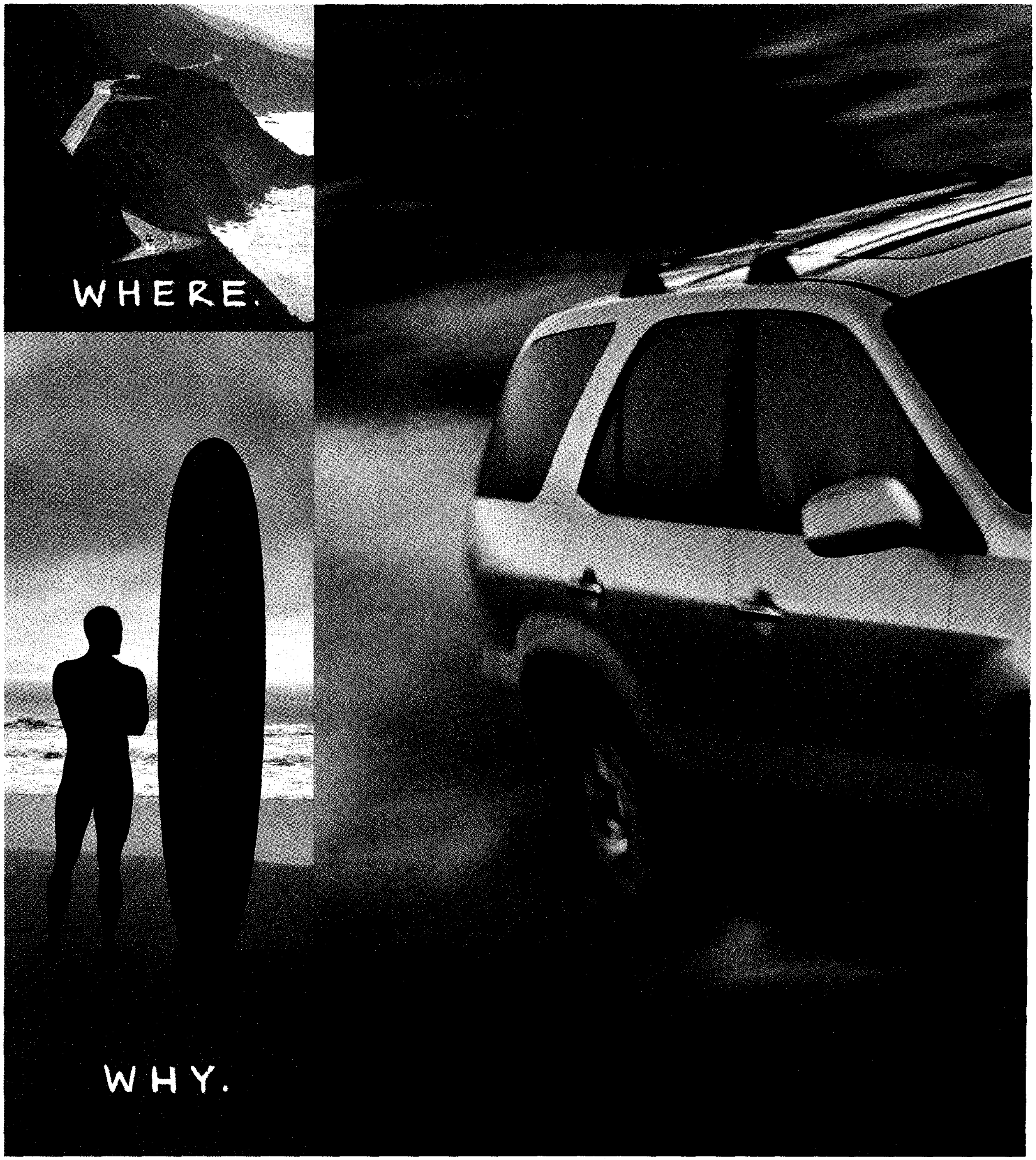

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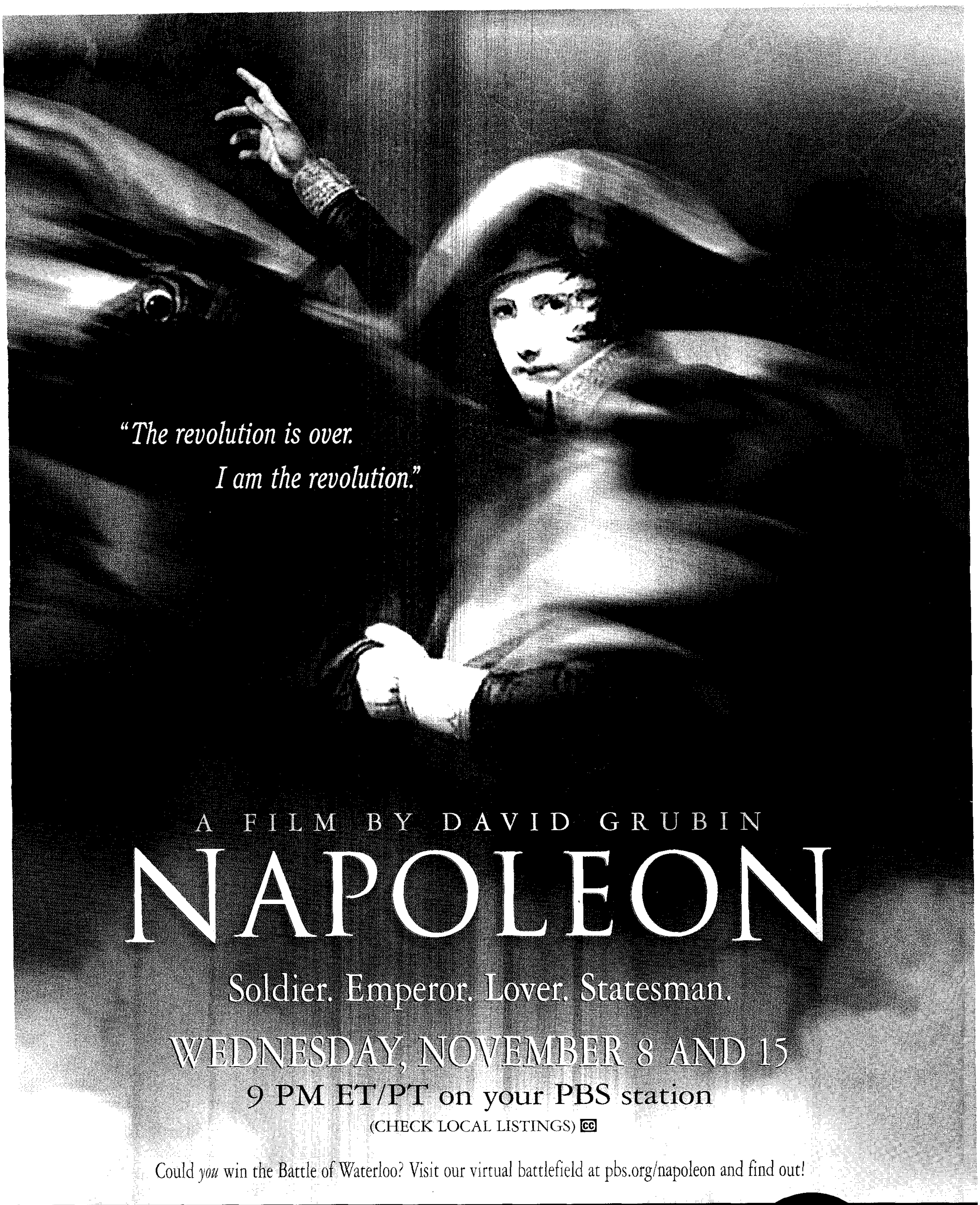

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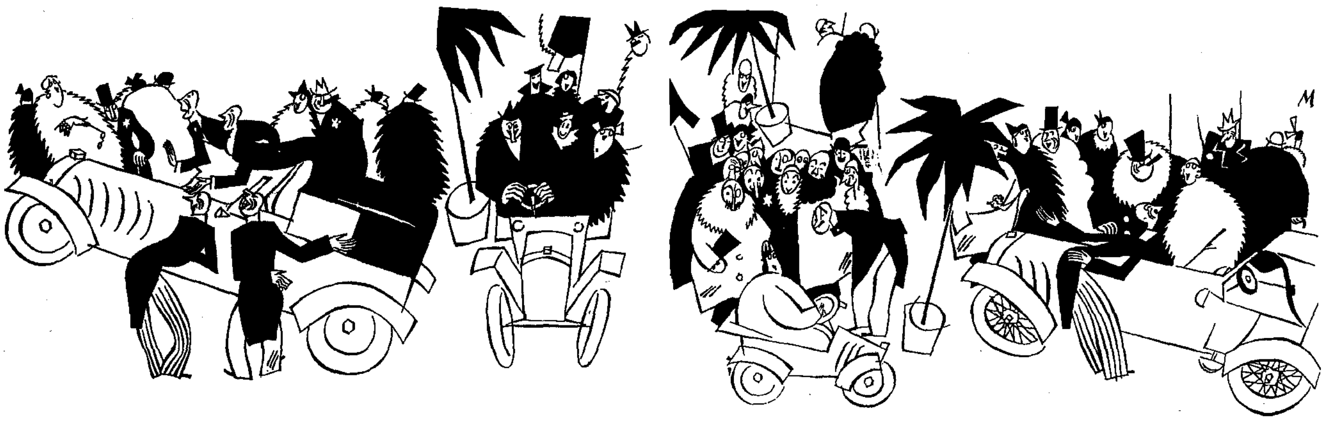


THE THEATRE

OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7				

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ALICE IN BED
Susan Sontag's 1993 fantasy play, which was inspired by the journals of Henry and William James's sister, Alice. In previews through Nov. 4. Opens Nov. 5 at 3. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

BETRAYAL
Juliette Binoche, Liev Schreiber, and John Slattery are the love triangle in Harold Pinter's 1980 psychological drama. David Leveaux is the director. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-9393.)

COBB
An encore production of Lee Blessing's play about the baseball legend Ty Cobb, which was originally staged by the Melting Pot Theatre last spring. In previews. (Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

COMIC POTENTIAL
Alan Ayckbourn's black comedy imagines a future in which robotlike beings work alongside actors in the film industry. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The New Federal Theatre presents a political thriller by Jay Broad, in which a U.S. President attempts to oust a black Supreme Court Justice. Preview on Nov. 1. Opens Nov. 2 at 7:30. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 279-4200.)

KIT MARLOWE
David Grimm's drama examines the tempestuous life of the Elizbethan playwright Christopher Marlowe. Brian Kulick is the director. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

THE LADY FROM THE SEA
The sixth installment in the Century Center's Ibsen series. Preview on Nov. 1. Opens Nov. 2 at 8 and continues through Nov. 18. (111 E. 15th St. 982-6782.)

RICHARD III
The Pearl Theatre Company's version of Shakespeare's play. Previews begin Nov. 2. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 505-3401.)

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW
Richard O'Brien's 1975 cult musical, directed by Christopher Ashley and choreographed by Jerry Mitchell. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Charles Busch's satire of New York intellectual angst, staged by Manhattan Theatre Club, moves to Broadway. Linda Lavin, Tony Roberts, and Michele Lee star. Lynn Meadow is the director. Two previews on Nov. 1. Opens Nov. 2 at 6:45. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

WHAT THE BUTLER SAW
The New Group's staging of Joe Orton's 1969 play stars Chloë Sevigny, Dylan Baker, Lisa Emery, and Peter Frechette. In previews. (Theatre at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BAAL
Bertolt Brecht's first play, produced by Jim Simpson and his lively Bat Theatre Company. The script suffers from many first-play problems (it's too long and occasionally clunky), but it clearly presents several of Brecht's preoccupations—how purely disgusting humans are, and whether that disgust can be transcended or defied. As such, it makes a good primer for his later, greater works. Michael J. X. Gladis, as Baal, is provocative from the first word he speaks; he makes the evening worthwhile not just dramaturgically, but also dramatically. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-2407.)

THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST
Once again, Tom Donaghy dissects the modern fragmented family, but this time around he tries to put it back together again—a problematic strategy, given that the people themselves are also broken. The skewed, tentative way in which Donaghy's characters inhabit his upside-down world makes their isolation seem natural, so the redemptive ending makes no sense. Mary Steenburgen's performance, however—as a lonely widow who attempts to attach herself to her stepson's disintegrating family—is something to see. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes Nov. 5.)

BIG POTATO
Opening the Jewish Repertory Theatre's season, a black comedy from Arthur Laurents, in which a Holocaust survivor from Kew Gardens, Queens, captures a Nazi war criminal in her beauty parlor. (The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes Nov. 5.)

A CLASS ACT
The late Ed Kleban's life following his success as the lyricist of "A Chorus Line" is the basis of this musical. With music and lyrics by Mr. Kleban and a book by Linda Kline and Lonny Price. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

DAHLING
Nan Schmid has the role of Tallulah Bankhead in a drama about the actress's life, in which seven other actors portray fifty-odd characters. (Grove Street Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 358-5812.)

THE DINNER PARTY
Neil Simon's new play, set in the private dining room of a Parisian restaurant. John Rando is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

DOLL
The camp company Theatre Couture puts its spin on Ibsen's "A Doll's House." Sherry Vine, Candis Cayne, David Ilku, and Mario Diaz are in the cast. With puppetry by Basil Twist. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

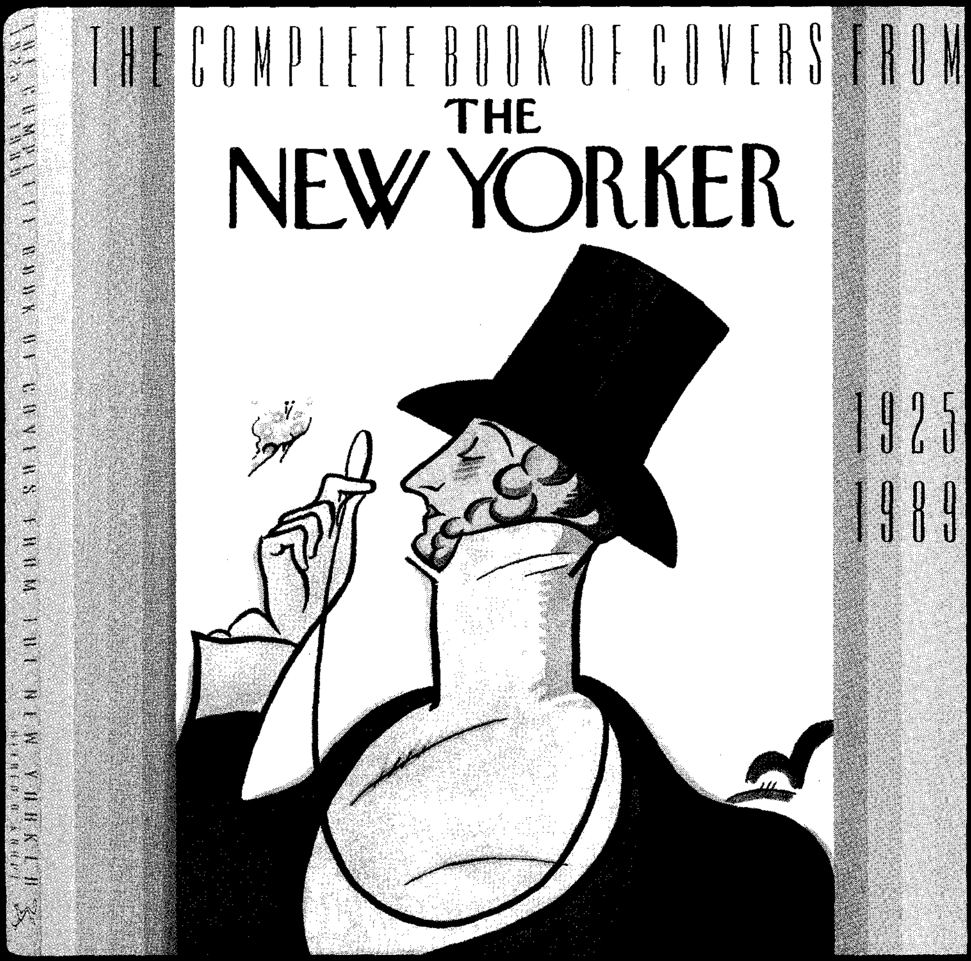
FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY
The latest edition of Gerard Alessandrini's ongoing musical satire of the players and the plays along the Great White Way. (Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.)

FOUR GUYS NAMED JOSÉ . . . AND UNA MUJER NAMED MARIA
This crowd-pleasing, crayon-colored revue of Latin song and dance is knowingly broad and hammy—imagine a sort of pan-Latin "Hee-Haw." The quartet of Josés (Philip Anthony, Henry Gainza, Allen Hidalgo, and Ricardo Puente) and Maria (Lissette Gonzalez) first send up the singers and songs that helped create Latin stereotypes (from Carmen Miranda's "I Make My Money with Bananas" to Ricky Martin's "Livin' La Vida Loca"), then deliver the remaining material—dance songs, songs of nostalgia for one's homeland, songs of love, songs about women named Maria—with exuberant wit and affection. (Blue Angel, 323 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

THE FULL MONTY
A musical version of the 1997 movie. With a book by Terrence McNally and music and lyrics by David Yazbek. Jack O'Brien is the director. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

GAME SHOW
The action of Bob Walton and Jeffrey Finn's "play" clumsily shifts from a trivia contest between audience volunteers to scripted, behind-the-scenes backstabbing between the producer (Cheryl Stern) and the host (Michael McGrath) of the show within the show. Rather than taking this setup for what it is—a gimmick—the creators have tried to furnish it with an actual plot, and the drama that unfolds during the "commercial breaks" is embarrassingly flat. The partici-

May 25, 1990. Pages 25, 58, and 179 lost to wallpaper the bathroom.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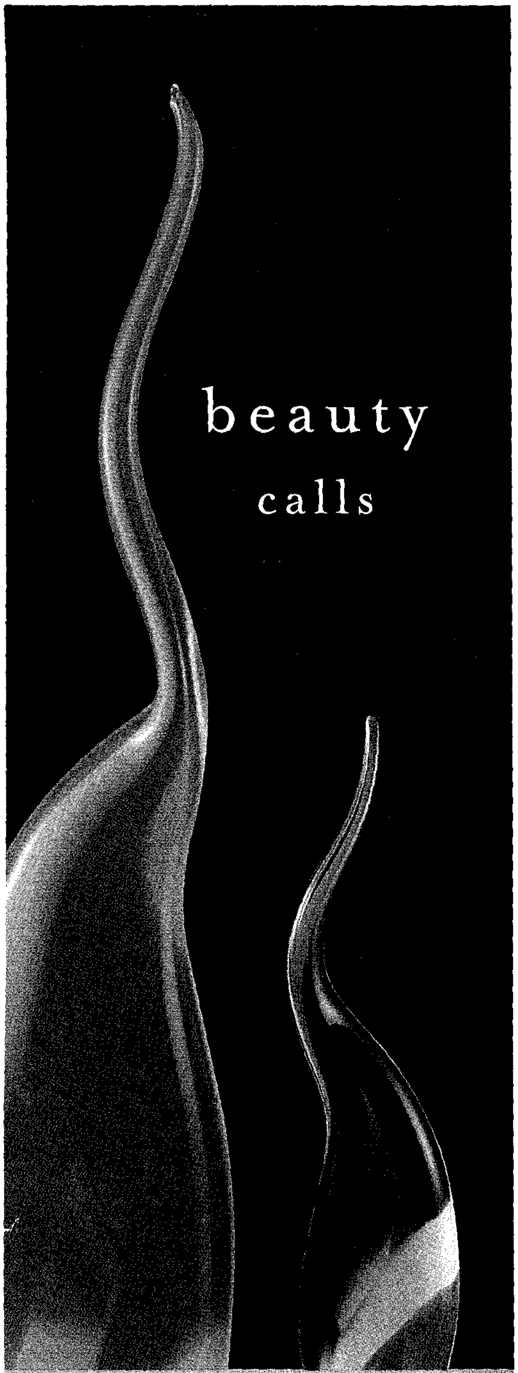

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were painted from a hillside on the outskirts of Jerusalem, looking north and east toward the Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock. The view is a classic Mediterranean sprawl, and each of the three versions captures its dry, complicated brightness with undramatized fidelity. None is quite as spectacular as Dubrow's 1997 World Trade Center views, but the artist's blinkered purposefulness remains quietly inspiring. Through Nov. 18. (Salander O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606.)

WHITFIELD LOVELL
In the past, Lovell has done his charcoal drawings of nineteenth- and twentieth-century African Americans directly on walls; he's left his mark on a slave owner's Italian villa and on a cabin built to commemorate a demolished black neighborhood. The tableaux in this show are more portable, done on untreated vintage boards, to which he attaches found-object props. One portrait of three young men in suits is bordered at the bottom by shoe-shine equipment; a sober gentleman's body erupts in a fountain of American flags; glass apothecary jars hover around an older woman's face. The props don't refer to individual histories, or suggest fictions meant to be taken literally, and they don't enhance the effects of his drawings the way the settings of his site-specific works do. Through Nov. 11. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111.)

TABITHA VEVERS
Each of the small, varnished, devotional-style paintings collected in "Flying Dreams" is captioned in ornate, spidery script, with texts describing dreams of flight, supplied by the artist and her friends. The selections range from the confident, instructional voice of a woman who dives up out of a fountain ("I'm trying to show my husband that flying is very much like water ballet") to the more nerve-racking story of a nude pursued ("It is a struggle even just to stay above the treetops. Sometimes I continue flying purely for pleasure after I've escaped"). Vevers' figures are plain and her horizons empty, and the size and texture of her work exalt the dreamers' yearning as neatly as sleep did. Through Nov. 11. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 307-5730.)

Short List

R. B. KITAJ
Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900.
Through Dec. 2.

DAVID LEVINE
Foundation for Hellenic Culture, 7 W. 57th St. 308-6908. Through Nov. 11.

FRANK STELLA
Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. 752-5135.
Through Dec. 22.

DAVID TRUE
De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.
262-5050. Through Nov. 18.

BILL VIOLA
James Cohan, 41 W. 57th St. 755-7171.
Through Nov. 25.

TOM WESSELMAN
Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888.
Through Dec. 9.

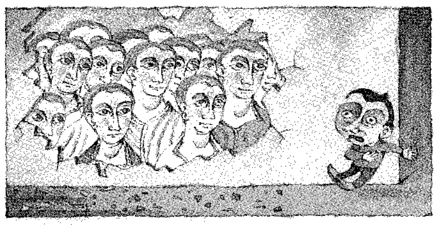
ANDREW ZEGA AND BERND H. DAMS
Didier Aaron, 32 E. 67th St. 988-5248.
Through Nov. 4.

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

STEVE DE FRANK
Making art is child's play for DeFrank, who creates photo-realist "paintings" out of Lite Brite pegs—at least eighty thousand per image—in lieu of brushstrokes. He delves into childhood for subject matter as well; all four of the images on view reproduce posters, family snapshots, and school portraits, circa 1974. The most unsettling one depicts his mother and his father, all goofy parental normalcy except for their total nudity. The picture evokes the toe-curling embarrassment children can feel in the face (not to mention tan lines) of their

BOOK CURRENTS

Up Against the Wall



Early Christians who painted on church walls were faced with a dilemma: how do you portray an invisible God who has told you, in no uncertain terms, not to create graven images? Herbert L. Kessler's **SPIRITUAL SEEING** (University of Pennsylvania) explains that religious wall paintings were protected from charges of idolatry by their educational value. "To adore images is one thing," Pope Gregory the Great wrote. "To teach with their help what should be adored is another." Many artists decided that it was best to be on the safe side. A Giotto fresco in Padua depicts a group of angels assembled around a Christ who is painted on a wooden panel set into the plaster, thus emphasizing the pictorial qualities of the figure.

In Diego Rivera's famous murals of the twenties, thirties, and forties, God was not just invisible but dead, replaced with Communist ideology. Yet as **DIEGO RIVERA: A RETROSPECTIVE**, edited by Cynthia Newton Helms (Norton), points out, the artist had spent seventeen months in Italy studying frescoes, including some of Giotto's. By blending European techniques with elements of the pre-Columbian art of his native Mexico, Rivera was able to forge an iconography of industrial life which, as he put it, "made the masses the hero of monumental art."

Against such a grandiose approach to wall painting, J. L. Carr's novel **A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY** (New York Review Books) remains appealingly human. Uncovering a medieval mural in a country church, Tom Birkin finds relief from traumatic memories of the First World War and feels a growing kinship with the master whose beard hairs are still stuck in the paint—"a nameless painter reaching from the dark to show me what he could do."

—*Leo Carey*

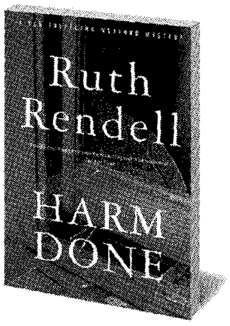
SERGIO RUZZIER

Books.
[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

Murders & Mysteries Worth Investigating

HARM DONE

by Ruth Rendell



The picture-postcard façade of Kingsmarkham collapses into a disturbing morass of violence, betrayal and vengeance when a young girl's inexplicable reappearance coincides with the disappearance of a three-year-old and the release of a pedophile. Inspector Wexford struggles to extricate the truth from this tangled web of evil and hidden secrets. (Vintage)

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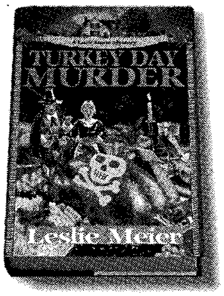
TURKEY DAY MURDER

by Leslie Meier



The citizens of Tinker's Cove are gearing up for their annual Thanksgiving festivities when a local Native American activist is the victim of foul play. So, amateur sleuth Lucy Stone adds investigating murder to her holiday to-do list, along with cooking a Thanksgiving meal for twelve finicky diners and keeping her kids from destroying each other. (Kensington)

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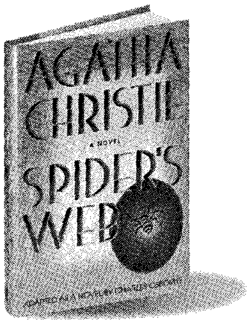
SPIDER'S WEB

by Agatha Christie,
Adapted as a Novel by Charles Osborne



An all-new adaptation of an original play from the incomparable doyenne of the mystery writer's guild, Agatha Christie, *Spider's Web* centers on the discovery of a body at an elegant house and the frantic efforts of the hostess and her guests to circumvent the police and solve the murder themselves. (Minotaur Books)

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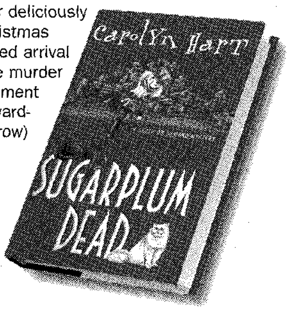
SUGARPLUM DEAD

by Carolyn Hart



Annie and Max Darling return in another deliciously thrilling tale of intrigue and murder. Christmas plans are thrown aside by the unexpected arrival of Annie's long-absent father and by the murder of an aging film star in the latest installment in the Agatha, Anthony and Macavity award-winning Death on Demand series. (Morrow)

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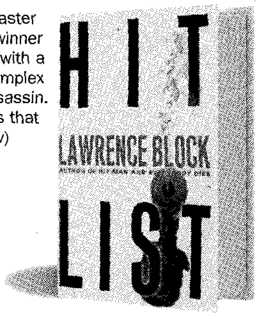
HIT LIST

by Lawrence Block



The Mystery Writers of America Grand Master and four-time Edgar and Shamus award-winner follows up the short story cycle *Hit Man* with a novel starring his antihero, Keller, the complex and consummately professional hired assassin. As jobs begin to go wrong, Keller realizes that he is on someone else's hit list. (Morrow)

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The International Center of Photography opens its redesigned midtown space on November 3, with free admission for the day. This photograph by Robert Polidori shows work from Annie Leibovitz's "Women," one of three shows there (see Photography).

parents. With the dazzling intricacy of his gridded images, DeFrank has created a pointillism for the plastic age. Que Seurat, Seurat. Through Nov. 11. (Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937.)

Short List

CARL ANDRE / ZOE LEONARD
Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Andre through Nov. 18; Leonard through Nov. 21.
DAMIEN HIRST
Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 741-1111.
Through Dec. 16.
BEATRIZ MILHAZES
Thorp, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St.
691-6565. Through Nov. 25.
GERHARD RICHTER
Schoormans, 508 W. 26th St. 243-3159.
Through Nov. 25.
MATTHEW RITCHIE
Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.
Through Nov. 25.
SARAH SZE
Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 680-9889.
Through Nov. 20.
TONY TASSET
Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500.
Through Nov. 25.
T. J. WILCOX
Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St.
627-5258. Through Nov. 11.
ZHANG XIAOGANG
Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999.
Through Nov. 25.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

PEDRO BARBEITO
This young Spanish-born artist's canvases enlist every available high-tech resource, including satellite X rays, 3-D printing, pixellization, and computer-game graphics. Barbeito uses them to create meticulous, intricate images like "Crab Nebula: Two Neutron Stars Colliding," an explosion of translucent magenta and yellow mesh with a small plastic model projecting from its center. The craftsmanship that goes into making such pieces is extraordinary, but it's hard to tell whether it represents a cynical hankering for techno-glamour or the passion of a true geek. Through Nov. 11. (Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753.)

JAMES ESBER
Two shows ago, the Brooklyn-based artist began making images out of colored Plasticine—a kiddie-art material if there ever was one. His latest efforts, smeared directly onto the gallery walls, are instantly charming as demonstrations of woozy surrealist draftsmanship and of sheer thumb power. Their iconography, though—appropriated from sentimental tchotchkes and Rockwell illustrations—seems a little glib, as do titles like "I Wuv U." Oddly, Esber's paintings in conventional acrylic are often more subtly inventive; with their coiled marks, they read as free-form descendants of Peter Saul and R. Crumb. Through Nov. 11. (P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642.)

Short List

MARY ESCH
Bronwyn Keenan, 3 Crosby St. 431-5083.
Through Nov. 11.
DONALD JUDD
Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224.
Through Nov. 11.
CHRIS HIEBERT
Kramarsky, 560 Broadway. 966-6601.
Through Nov. 11.
SEAN MELLYN
Tilton/Kustera, 49 Greene St. 941-1775.
Through Nov. 25.
JASON RHOADES
Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074.
Through Nov. 18.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
Nov. 1: Furniture and decorative works of art, principally from the nineteenth century. Items include a range of offerings, from a pair of Japanese porcelain gilt-bronze mounted covered cachepots to an early-twentieth-century vampire-killing kit, a walnut box fitted with a gun, eight silver bullets, flour of garlic, and other necessities. ♦ Nov. 2-3: An auction of prints from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. ♦ Nov. 3-4: Contemporary prints, including work by Jim Dine, Susan Rothenberg, and Frank Stella. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S

Nov. 1: The conclusion of a two-day sale of nineteenth- and twentieth-century prints. ♦ Nov. 2: Two auctions of French furniture, tapestries, and works of art from a private collection, including a number of examples by André-Charles Boulle, one of the greatest cabinetmakers in history. ♦ Nov. 2-3: An auction of fine and rare wines. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

DOYLE

Nov. 1: An auction of antiquarian books, autographs, manuscripts, and maps. ♦ Nov. 1: A selection of Old Master, modern, and contemporary prints, including an 1895 lithograph by Edvard Munch. ♦ Nov. 1-2: Couture and textiles, from the eighteen-seventies to the nineteen-seventies. ♦ Nov. 7: European paintings and sculpture. (175 East 87th St. 427-2730.)

SWANN

Nov. 2: Books on Greece and the Levant and miscellaneous travel literature, including "The Memorial Edition of the Works of Sir Richard Burton," a first edition of John Quincy Adams's "Letters on Silesia," and Pinkerton's "A General Collection of Voyages," from 1808-14. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ROE ETHRIDGE

Two closeups of young pine trees, two larger-than-life head shots of models, two portraits of U.P.S. drivers framed inside their familiar brown trucks, an overhead view of an ambulance accident, and one poster-size blowup of a U.P.S. sticker: this is Ethridge's description of the relationship between glamour, commerce, global delivery systems, and environmental equilibrium. His exquisite prints demonstrate control of the medium with brilliant color and intelligent use of detail—rows of elegant pine needles fading from green to brown echo the young models' eyelashes, which change color and texture (for the worse) under heavy mascara. Though Ethridge's conceptual arguments can be a bit much, visual rewards compensate. Through Nov. 4. (Kreps, 516A W. 20th St. 741-8849.)

JITKA HANZLOVÁ

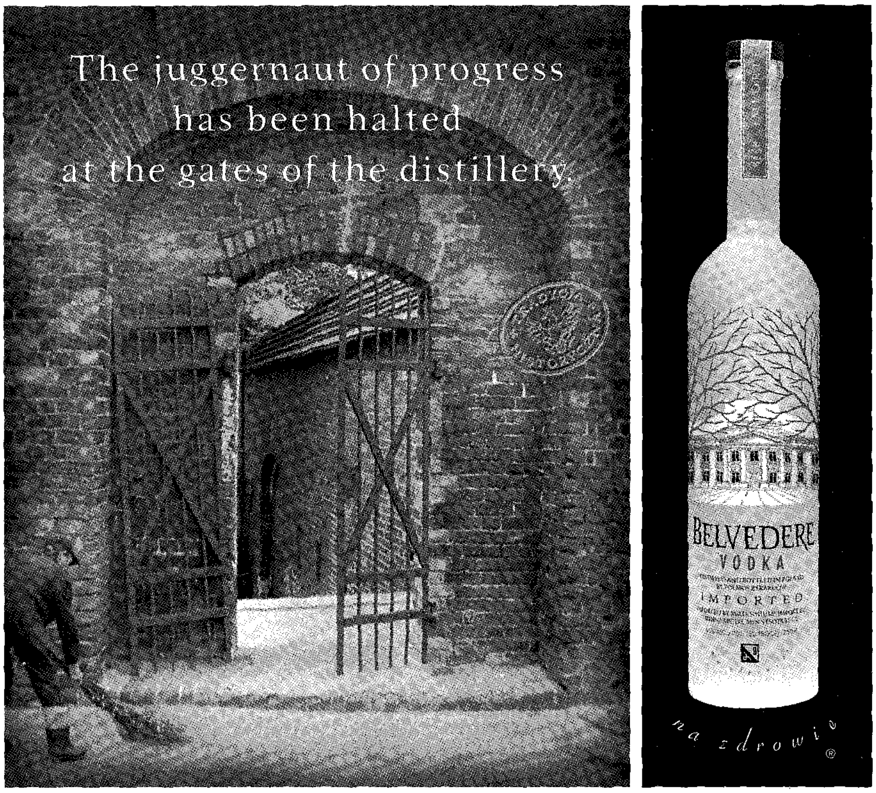
More than fifty of the color pictures shown here are three-quarter portraits of women of a wide range of ages, posed on the street in their own clothes, looking into the camera. The gallery describes Hanzlová as "cautiously" capturing the way her subjects represent themselves, but she shows less timidity than calculated, artistically profitable decorum, a delicacy that must serve her as well in introducing herself to potential models as it does in introducing them to viewers. Twenty similarly simple and direct landscapes, taken in the Belgian Ardennes, make up the balance of the show. Through Nov. 25. (Gasser and Grunert, 524 W. 19th St. 807-9494.)

NICOLE TRAN BA VANG

Tran Ba Vang, who lives and works in Paris, produces semiannual collections of work to coincide with fashion week there. This season's series of digitally altered photographs appears to show models taking off second skins: bras with hard nipples on them, a wrinkled torso corset with a belly button. A few images give themselves away—one pair of oddly constructed leg-mimicking boots has ankles unrealistically wide for the models on show, while a pair of flesh panties is clearly just a bare behind. Through Nov. 11. (Team, 527 W. 26th St. 279-9219.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

I.C.P.'s redesigned midtown space, billed as the new Times Square's first museum, opens to the public Nov. 3 with three shows: Lorie Novak's "Collected Visions," Annie Leibovitz's "Women," and a survey of the Center's large permanent collection called "Reflections in a Glass Eye." Uptown, "Eugène Atget: The Pioneer" continues. The Museum Mile location will remain open through June, when its buyer, who plans to re-



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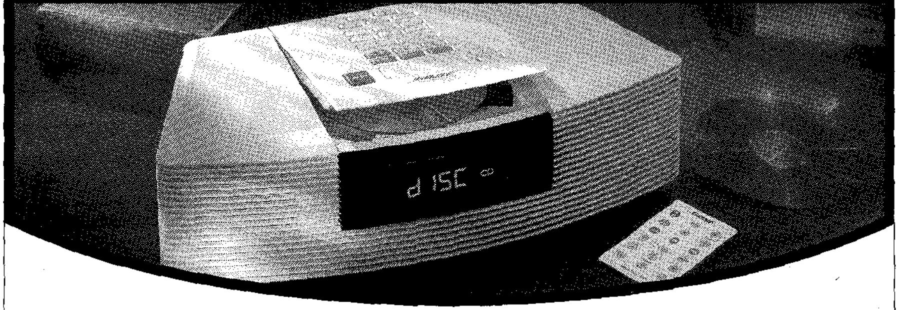

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turn the building to use as a private residence, takes over. (Uptown: 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6. Midtown: 1166 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open Mondays through Thursdays, 10-5; Thursdays and Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

ANDREW BUSH
Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 431-0147.
Through Dec. 12.
LUCINDA DEVLIN
Rodgers, 529 W. 20th St. 414-9810.
Through Dec. 16.
SCOTT PETERMAN
Silverstein, 520 W. 21st St. 929-4300.
Through Nov. 11.
W. EUGENE SMITH
Klotz, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211.
Through Nov. 18.
EDWARD STEICHEN
Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.
Through Dec. 2.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum and the Whitney Museum.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Three of the company's fall operas continue in repertory: **"La Bohème,"** with Cristina Gallardo-Domas, Sondra Radvanovsky, Marcello Giordani, and Jean-Luc Chaignaud; conducted by Marco Armiliato. (Nov. 1 at 8 and Nov. 4 at 1:30.) ♦ With Dwayne Croft replacing Mr. Chaignaud. (Nov. 7 at 7:30.) ♦ **"Fidelio,"** in a new production set in modern times, with Karita Mattila, Ben Heppner, and René Pape; Gareth Morell. (Nov. 2 at 8.) ♦ **"Turandot,"** with Jane Eaglen, Angela Gheorghiu, Richard Margison, and Robert Lloyd; Mr. Armiliato. (Nov. 3 at 8.) ♦ **"Carmen,"** with Olga Borodina and Roberto Alagna; Bertrand de Billy. (Nov. 4 at 8.) ♦ The season première of **"Die Zauberflöte,"** with Angela Maria Blasi, Mary Dunleavy, Michael Schade, and Gerald Finley; Sebastian Weigle. (Nov. 6 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
"La Traviata," with Virginia Grasso, Gerard Powers, and Brian Davis; Joseph Rescigno. (Nov. 1 at 7:30 and Nov. 4 at 8.) ♦ **"The Love for Three Oranges,"** with Kathleen Brett, Linda Roark-Strummer, Richard Troxell, and Matthew Chellis; George Manahan. (Nov. 2 at 7:30 and Nov. 5 at 8.) ♦ **"Madama Butterfly,"** with Liping Zhang, Elizabeth Batton, David Corman, and John Hancock; Brent McMunn. (Nov. 3 at 8.) ♦ The company's first-ever production of Handel's **"Rinaldo"** continues its run, with countertenor David Daniels in the title role; Harry Bicket. (Nov. 4 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

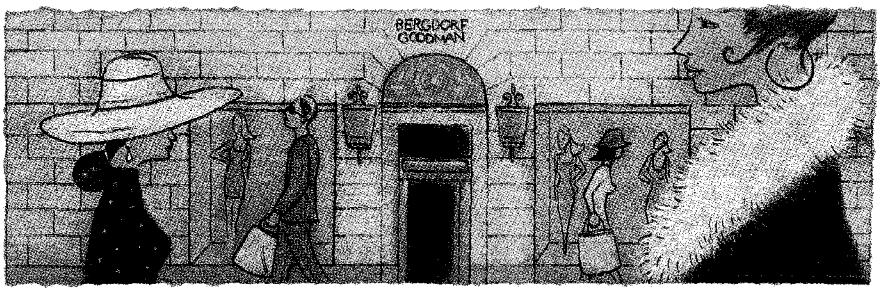
AMATO OPERA COMPANY
The company continues its run of Verdi's "Il Trovatore." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Nov. 4 at 7:30 and Nov. 5 at 2:30.)

THE GOGMAGOGS: "GOBBLEDYGOOK"
The innovative young British string ensemble continues its "mixed-theatre" presentation of music, movement, and the spoken word. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 1-4 and Nov. 7-11 at 8.)

92ND STREET Y
Aaron Copland's children's opera, **"The Second Hurricane"** (premièred in a 1937 production by Orson Welles), is very much a socialist parable of its time; Susan Kander's updating of the original libretto keeps the action in the Depression years but gives the dialogue a more contemporary feel. Paul Lustig Dunkel conducts members of the

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

A Bergdorf Goodman Isn't Hard to Find



Of the old-guard department stores that once lined Fifth Avenue (the late Bonwit Teller, with its Art Deco friezes; the much mourned Best & Company), only three survive: Lord & Taylor, Saks Fifth Avenue, and the venerable Bergdorf Goodman. In the seventy-odd years since Bergdorf's found its way to the site of Cornelius Vanderbilt II's mansion at Fifty-eighth Street and Fifth Avenue, the store has gone through a number of modifications, including a belowdecks cosmetics floor and the removal of men's merchandise to a gleaming edifice across the street. Despite shifts in ownership (Herman Bergdorf was out of the picture by 1903, and Andrew Goodman bowed out in 1975), the place retains, along with its wedding-cake ceilings and painted boiserie, a white-glove ambience. The attended elevators may be gone, but other hallmarks of genteel department-store life—salespeople willing to conduct a floor-by-floor search for a particular shade of cashmere, mid-afternoon tea sandwiches in the café—coëxist comfortably with surprisingly fashion-forward wares. These days, those familiar lavender shopping bags are as likely to contain lambskin bustiers as linen jabots.

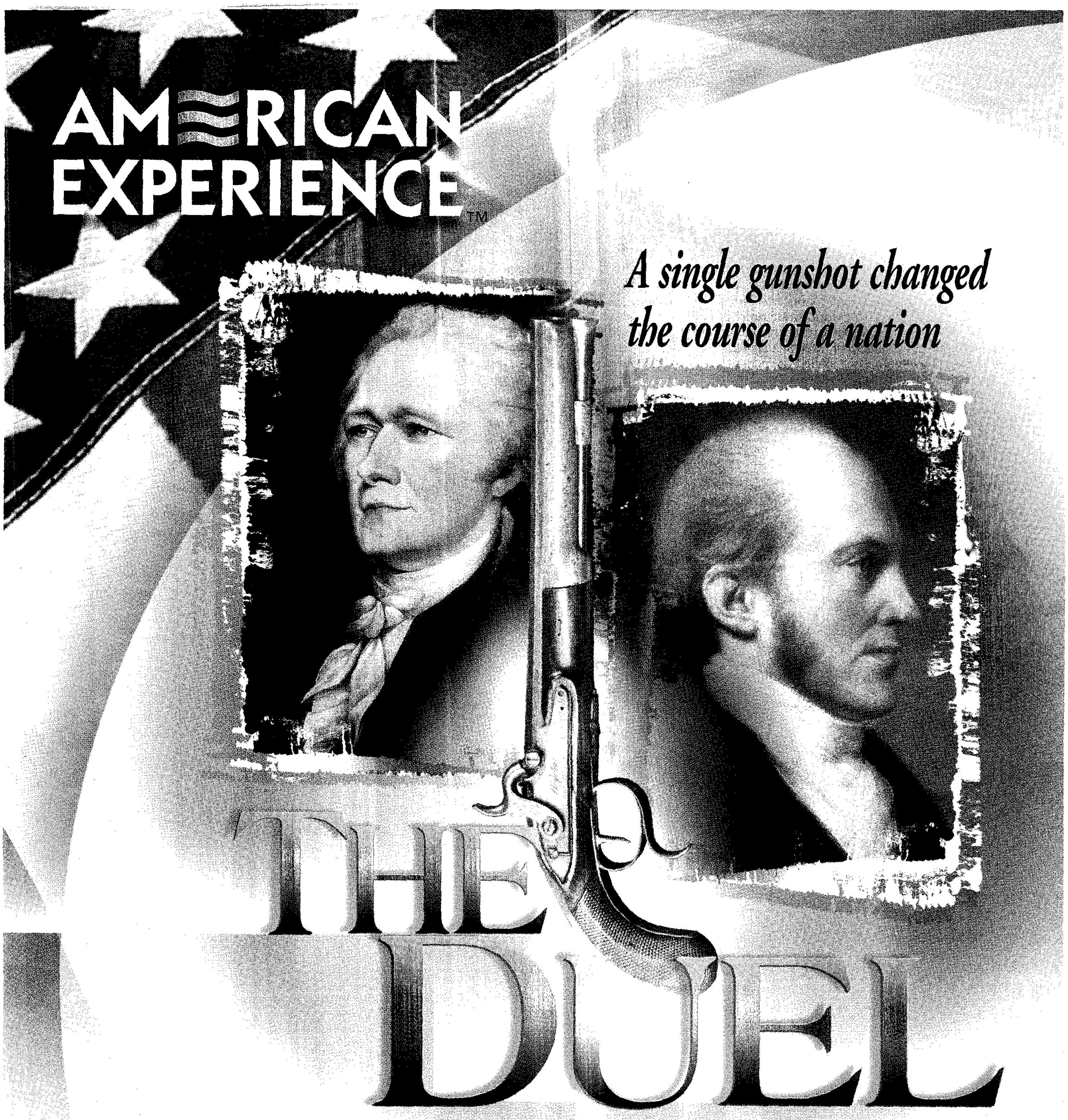
The former Miss Bergdorf department, with its echoes of tweed suits and circle pins, was transformed eight years ago into the modish On 5ive, which now houses such extravagances as cardigans by the nuttily exclusive London firm Voyage (until recently, its Fulham Road boutique had a restrictive door policy). Featuring not just a welter of turquoise, pink, and gray metallic flowers but gold-crocheted lace, ruched ribbon, and even a fur border, a Voyage sweater costs a cool $1,100. Among the European goods on the second and third floors are a pair of blood-red patent-leather Dolce & Gabbana boots ($835) with dangerously curved heels seemingly inspired by "L'Histoire d'O." And Edie Sedgwick-worthy Courrèges battle jackets in pistachio vinyl-coated fabric ($385) hang near a bower devoted to the work of John Galliano—black silk bias-cut gowns ($2,370) amid a trove of wardrobe trunks, zebra rugs, baroque mirrors, and trompe-l'œil portieres.

Continental designers may supply much of the razzle, but American classicists have been suiting up Bergdorf customers for decades. A burnt-orange, strapless duchesse-satin evening dress with a delicate mermaid effect, by Bill Blass, is $2,990. Geoffrey Beene's fuzzy raspberry wool jacket has a subdued Empire waist, black satin pocket flaps, collar, and cuffs, and five toggle buttons that link it to its distant ancestor, the suburban car coat ($2,790). Just inside the Fifty-seventh Street revolving doors, a rose-colored velvet wrap with kimono sleeves by Adrienne Landau, generously trimmed with pink fox and festooned with fringe, stands ready to envelop a latter-day Zelda Fitzgerald ($2,600).

On the seventh floor, below the seventeen-room penthouse that once housed the Goodman family (it's now the "beauty center," a hair salon and spa), a selection of between-the-wars tableware includes an English teapot shaped like a Cotswold cottage ($355). But the biggest draw this time of year is the collection of Christmas ornaments. Alongside Santas and sugarplums, there's a chic scarlet nightshirt ($12); lightly embroidered and trimmed with four pearl buttons, it seems right at home in Bergdorf's, despite being only four inches long.

—*Lynn Yaeger*

EDEL RODRIGUEZ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Westchester Philharmonic, along with young musicians and the Young People's Chorus of New York City. (Nov. 5 at 3. Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
In his Philharmonic début, Mikko Franck, the cherubic young Finnish conducting phenom, will substitute for Kurt Masur in a pair of programs. Nov. 2-4 at 8 and Nov. 7 at 7:30: Emanuel Ax will be the soloist in Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 2 in A Major (a more gracious and mysterious piece than the Concerto No. 1, but rarely performed) and in the New York première of "Red Silk Dance," by Bright Sheng, a composer skilled at melding the materials of Chinese and Western music; Sibelius's Second Symphony rounds out the evening. ♦ Nov. 4 at 2: Mr. Franck leads the Sibelius once more; the program begins with the wind Sextet (1905) of Carl Reinecke, who, like Mr. Masur, was once the conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.)

JUILLIARD SYMPHONY
James DePriest, the longtime conductor of the Oregon Symphony and a trained composer, is more sympathetic than most maestros to the music of our time. His program includes not only generous helpings of Wagner and Ravel but John Adams's foxtrot "The Chairman Dances" (already a repertory piece) and the brooding, moonlit Cello Concerto of William Walton, in which Juilliard student Mark Kosower will be the soloist. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 1 at 8.)

ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC
The famed early-music ensemble presents an evening of Baroque masterworks, led by its new director and solo violinist Andrew Manze. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Nov. 2 at 8.)

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC PHILHARMONIA
The German composer Hans Werner Henze, two of whose works were showcased at Carnegie Hall in October, will receive another local performance when Philharmonia guest conductor Graziella Contratto (an assistant conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic) leads the ensemble in the 1977 "Aria de la Folia Española," followed by Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique." (Borden Auditorium, Broadway at 122nd St. Nov. 3 at 8.)

NEW YORK VIRTUOSO SINGERS
Italian and Eastern European composers have provided some of the most appealing and accessible music of the last century, bringing lyricism, humor, and an ardent spirituality to complex techniques that would turn to dust in the hands of others. Four of the best of them—Berio, Dallapiccola, Ligeti, and Penderecki—are featured on the latest program of this sixteen-voice chorus, which specializes in performances of contemporary music. (Merkin Concert Hall. 501-3330. Nov. 4 at 8.)

BRONX ARTS ENSEMBLE ORCHESTRA
John Corigliano, one of the few classical composers to achieve success in writing for films, won an Academy Award this year for his score to "The Red Violin." Lehman College (where he is Distinguished Professor of Music) will include music from the film in its "Celebrating Corigliano" concert, which features the violinist Tamaki Kawakubo and the conductor Jonathan Sheffer. (Lehman College Concert Hall, the Bronx. 718-960-8833. Nov. 5 at 2. Admission is free, but tickets are required.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY
An all-Tchaikovsky program, including a clutch of student pieces, the "Sérénade Mélancolique" and Valse Scherzo (with violinist Ja Ram Kim), and the Symphony No. 1, "Winter Dreams," the most inspired and affecting of the composer's first orchestral works. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. 799-1259. Nov. 6 at 2 and 7 and Nov. 7 at 8.)

RECITALS

MIKHAIL PLETNEV
Like his predecessor Rachmaninoff, Pletnev is a composer, a conductor, and a pianist all in one. In his Carnegie Hall recital début, however, the artist will limit himself to the keyboard (on which his skills were good enough for him to be included in the Philips 1998 release "Great Pianists of the 20th Century") in music of Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin (the four scherzos). (247-7800. Nov. 1 at 7:30.)

CONCERTANTE CHAMBER PLAYERS
Composed of eleven virtuoso string players, the young ensemble presents a program of early Shostakovich (the stirring, romantic Two Pieces for String Octet), obscure Bruch (another octet, Opus Posthumous), and the Sextet No. 2 of Brahms. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Nov. 1 at 8.)

TOKYO STRING QUARTET
Ever since Haydn—who perfected the form—the typical string quartet has tended to be a piece in four movements. But some attractive quartet movements (like Schubert's "Quartettsatz" in C Minor) never grew up, while others got big enough to stand on their own (Beethoven's "Grosse Fuge"). The Tokyo, an ensemble of exceptional precision, will mix these and other fragments (by Mozart, Webern, and György Kurtág) among the two movements of Mendelssohn's String Quartet Op. 81, written in the troubled last year of his life. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 1 at 8.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
Nov. 1 at 8: The Orion String Quartet plays music by three composers of eastern Central Europe: Haydn, Smetana (the first of the "From My Life" quartets), and Kurtág. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-

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5788.) ♦ Nov. 2 at 6:45: A concert of music by Kodály (the Duo for Violin and Cello) and Brahms (the Piano Trio in C Major), played by the violinist Viviane Hagner, the cellist Gary Hoffman, and the pianist Jonathan Biss. (Rose Studio.) ♦ Nov. 5 at 5: The violinist Cho-Liang Lin and some distinguished colleagues (including the cellist Gary Hoffmann and the pianist Jon Kimura Parker) play music of Lutoslawski, Piazzolla, Shostakovich, and Bright Sheng. (Alice Tully Hall.)

ARTEK

The early-music ensemble, in residence at St. Francis of Assisi Church, presents a forty-minute program of Bach arias. (135 W. 31st St. No tickets necessary. Nov. 2 at 1:15.) ♦ The group follows up with a full program of Bach cantatas. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 6 at 8.)

AUSTRIAN CONCERT SERIES

Few pieces by Ernst Krenek (1900-91) may have entered the working repertory—although the operas "Jonny Spielt Auf" and "Karl V" have long lingered at the edge of it—but his fifty-year career held up a mirror to the the twentieth century, reflecting almost all of its stylistic shifts, from late Romanticism and neoclassicism to the use of serialist and electronic techniques. In the fifth of eight concerts that will feature Krenek's music this season, the Austrian Cultural Institute is sponsoring a performance (by the noted baritone Wolfgang Holzmaier and the pianist Russell Ryan) of the song cycle "A Journey Through the Austrian Alps" (1929), one of the composer's best-known works. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. Admission is free, but reservations are required; call the Institute at 759-5165. Nov. 2 at 8.)

SYLVAN WINDS

The wind quintet opens its season with a concert in tribute to Ronald Rosenman, the recently deceased composer and oboist of the celebrated New York Woodwind Quintet; two Rosenman pieces will share the program with several works of Bach's, including selections from "The Art of the Fugue" as arranged by Rosenman's flutist colleague, the late Samuel Baron. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 122 W. 69th St. 904-1422, ext. 16. Nov. 3 at 8.)

ANDRAS SCHIFF

The Hungarian pianist plays Book I of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier." (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 4 at 7:30.)

SONIC BOOM 2000: NEWBAND

The ensemble performs several Harry Partch pieces (on instruments from the composer's collection), along with music by Elizabeth Brown and Dean Drummond. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. 279-4200. Nov. 4 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"QUEENS JAZZ TRAIL"

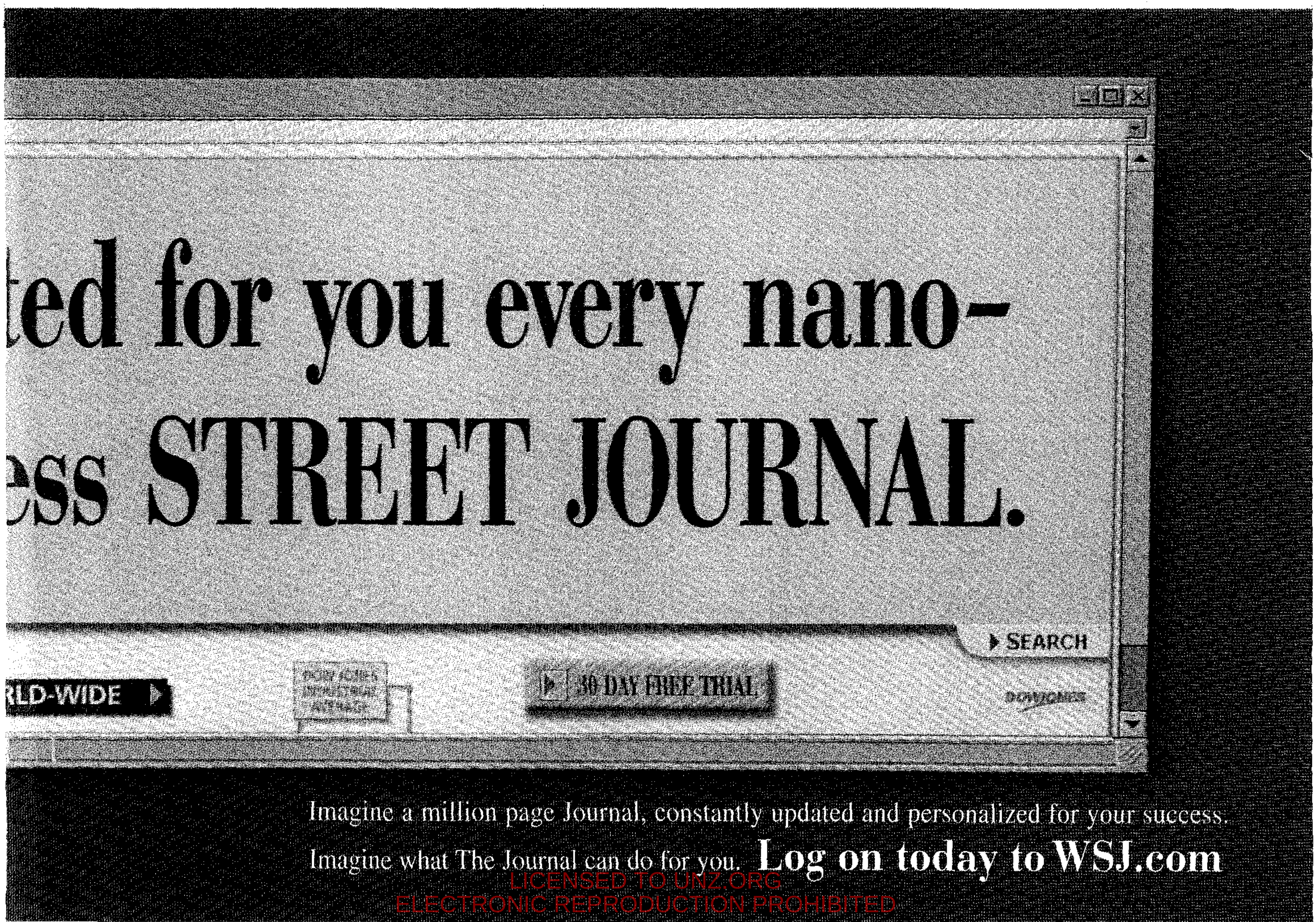
On the first Saturday of each month through December, the Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts offers a five-hour guided tour of the musical highlights of Queens. Led by the Queens native and singer Coby Knight and the bassist Clyde Bullard, the tour stops in Corona, to visit the former home of trumpeter Louis Armstrong and the Dorrie Miller apartment complex, where the saxophonist Cannonball Adderley and his brother, trumpeter Nat, once lived (and which is still home to the saxophonist Jimmy Heath). The group then goes by van to Queens College, for a tour of the Louis Armstrong Archives (trumpets, television footage, etc.) at the Benjamin Rosenthal Library, before continuing on to Addisleigh Park, in the neighborhood of St. Albans, which was once home to Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, and Fats Waller, among others. (Nov. 4 at 10 A.M. For more information, call 718-463-7700.)

READINGS

Nov. 1 at 8: By John Ashbery and Bernadette Mayer, from their poetry. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door.) ♦ Nov. 2 at 7: By the poet Philip Levine. (Stella Adler Conservatory, 419 Lafayette St. For reservations, which are required, call 260-0525.) ♦ Nov. 5 at 2: By the documentarian David Isay, from his new book, "Flophouse: Life on the Bowery." (Eldridge Street Synagogue, 12 Eldridge St. For more information, call 978-0803.) ♦ Nov. 6 at 7: By Ben Greenman, Jonathan Schwarz, Rodney Rotham, Tom Bissell, and others, from their fiction. (Housing Works Used Books Café, 126 Crosby St. No tickets necessary.)

Andrew Manze leads music by Geminiani at Alice Tully Hall.

ELVIS SWIFT



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MOVIES OPENING

BLUE MOON
A couple revisits a Catskills cabin in an attempt to rekindle their marriage, in this drama directed by John Gallagher. Opening Nov. 3.

BOESMAN AND LENA
An adaptation of Athol Fugard's play set in the mudflats of Cape Town, with Danny Glover and Angela Bassett. Directed by John Berry. Opening Nov. 3.

CHARLIE'S ANGELS
Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore, and Lucy Liu as the fashionable female detectives and Bill Murray as Bosley, in this big-screen adaptation of the television show. Directed by McG. Opening Nov. 3.

KIPPUR
Israeli filmmaker Amos Gitai wrote and directed this remembrance of the 1973 Yom Kippur war. In Hebrew. Opening Nov. 3. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

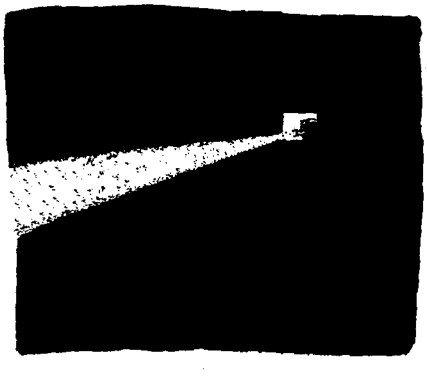
THE LEGEND OF BAGGER VANCE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 3.

FILM NOTES

ALMOST FAMOUS
Cameron Crowe's genial but remarkably undramatic account of his life and not very hard times as a fifteen-year-old rock critic in the early nineteen-seventies. Crowe's stand-in, William Miller (Patrick Fugit), leaves home against the wishes of his college-professor mom (Frances McDormand) when he accepts an assignment from *Rolling Stone* to cover a mid-level band called Stillwater. On the road, he falls into an intense admiration of the good-looking lead guitarist (Billy Crudup) and receives gentle treatment from a trio of groupies, the Band-Aids (led by Kate Hudson). Much of the movie plays easily and well as a record of good times, but there's no particular point to it.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 9/18/00.) (Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

BAMBOOZLED
In his latest picture, Spike Lee delivers some shattering news: TV is bad for us, and for race relations. Marlon Wayans plays Pierre Delacroix—a TV writer who is hired by a network to come up with a fresh idea, and duly delivers a minstrel show, complete with chicken gags and black actors encrusted in blackface. The ratings hit the roof, but Pierre and his colleague (Jada Pinkett-Smith), as well as the energetic stars of the act (Savion Glover and Tommy Davidson), come to feel besmirched by their success, as if they were betraying the black cause. (You can't help thinking that one of them might have noticed that to begin with.) Having started with satirical high jinks, the movie ends in desperate spasms of subplot, and you keep tripping over the big bump in Lee's conceit: the minstrel show itself is stupendously unamusing.—*Anthony Lane* (10/9/00) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

BEDAZZLED
Elizabeth Hurley, the model-actress, makes a fine, vampy Devil. Her eyes gleam with sinister intent, but her mouth seems to be a problem: she's always spitting her words. Did someone not hold the mike close enough? Brendan Fraser plays the office alpha geek who sells his soul for fame, fortune, and he hopes love, and he keeps up a funny stammering act through his various incarnations; after he's transformed into "the most emotionally sensitive man in the world," his lip quivers uncontrollably at every sunset. With quick dialogue and plentiful visual puns, the director Harold Ramis and the writer Larry Gelbart manage to breathe some life into an old, old story, but it's just a puff.—*Michael Agger* (Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Union Square.)



BEST IN SHOW
Christopher Guest reunites much of the cast of "Waiting for Guffman" for another mock documentary; the target this time around is the cloistered world of championship-dog breeding. Guest directs and scripts with a loose, improvisational style (no dialogue was written down), and while some of the scenes glide along with a quick-witted tempo, others are awkward. The dogs themselves are splendid, and when the satire works the laughs are plentiful. Best-in-group awards go to Parker Posey and Michael Hitchcock as an uptight suburban couple whose courtship involved adjacent Starbucks franchises, John Michael Higgins as a preening owner who outshines his shih tzu, and Fred Willard as a chipper commentator who showers asinine comments on the proceedings. If Guest has a trademark style, it's the airtight earnestness he demands of his cast—there's not one wink in the entire film.—*M.A.* (Angelika Film Center, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and 19th Street East 6.)

BILLY ELLIOT
The British director Stephen Daldry has previously concentrated on theatre; now, as if to prove that he's a man for all art forms, he's made a film about ballet. Billy Elliot (Jamie Bell) is a slim, pugnacious boy who doesn't enjoy his boxing lessons but casts a jealous glance at the dance class that rehearses nearby. He joins in, prospers, gets some private tuition from his careworn teacher (Julie Walters), and ends up auditioning for the Royal Ballet. Will he make it? Can you guess? Although the film is set during the miners' strike of 1984 (the most grievous strife in Britain's recent history), it slowly sheds its anger and abrasive comedy in favor of something softer. Billy's father (Gary Lewis) stops looking like a human pressure cooker and starts giving the boy encouraging hugs—a development we could do without. The best thing on show is Bell, whose ratty, unsentimental demeanor just about sees the story though. With music by T. Rex, The Jam, and other ethereal favorites of the classical stage.—*A.L.* (10/30/00) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

BLAIR WITCH 2: BOOK OF SHADOWS
Rubbishy, incoherent sequel to the hair-raising "documentary" about an encounter with the supernatural in the Maryland woods. A group of thrill seekers go on a tour of the same woods, and then retreat to a warehouse, where you are cooped up with them for an eternity. Directed by Joe Berlinger, a documentary filmmaker; written by Berlinger and Dick Beebe.—*D.D.* (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE CONTENDER
Vigorously unsubtle political entertainment. The Democratic President, Jackson Evans (Jeff Bridges), a wily, dominating fellow who may not be good at heart, nominates a woman, Senator Laine Hanson (Joan Allen), to be his Vice-President after the sitting Vice-President dies. A Republican congressman, Shelly Runyon (Gary Oldman), wants to block her. His weapon: some photographs of her participation, as a college freshman, in a frat-house orgy. When the Senator stands on her dignity, refusing to answer Runyon's questions, the movie becomes an attack on double standards—a noble conception but also a needlessly solemn one. The picture is juicily well acted, however, particularly by Oldman, whose congressman is physically mediocre in every way yet possesses a dour firepower that never lets up. Written and directed by Rod Lurie, who uses Washington unimaginatively, like a TV-movie director, but gets the best out of his cast. With Christian Slater as an ambitious young congressman and Sam Elliott as a Presidential adviser.—*D.D.* (10/16 & 10/23/00) (Battery Park 16, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia I and II, Union Square, Waverly 1 and 2, and Ziegfeld.)

DANCER IN THE DARK
The new Lars Von Trier film makes his previous efforts seem like models of orthodoxy and restraint. Shot in Sweden, it's set in an America of Von Trier's own devising. Most of the characters speak with foreign accents, and the heroine—a timid, bespectacled factory worker and single mother named Selma—is played by Björk, the Icelandic pop munchkin. Selma has a congenital eye disease, and she is saving up to pay for an operation for her young son, who will otherwise follow her into blindness. The film is unashamedly two-toned, split between a granular authenticity and a stylized gaudiness. The musical scenes—in the factory, on a railroad track—have a deliberate, stamping awkwardness, overlaid with Björk's animal wailing. Many viewers have refused to stomach this unhealthy mixture, yet it feels laced with surprising power, and the harshness of the dénouement is unfeigned.—*A.L.* (9/25/00) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, State, and Union Square.)

DR. T & THE WOMEN
Dressed to the nines in billowing capes, fur chokers, and huge, drooping hats, the upper-crust women of Dallas rush about the city, drinks in hand, and when they have nothing else to do, which is most of the time, they storm the office of their gynecologist, Dr. T (Richard Gere), a handsome and masterly practitioner who treats them like goddesses. At first, Robert Altman's movie seems to be an amiable, whirligig farce—and a borderline dirty joke—about a man who sugars women, and the women who love him in return, but it develops an odd apocalyptic tone. There are recurring rainstorms, including a real humdinger at the end, which is supposed to cleanse the fallen city of Dallas. Altman works with his usual fluid camera and his overlapped chattering voices, but there's a sourness bordering on condescension which destroys the pleasures of his skill.—*D.D.* (10/16 & 10/23/00) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, Cinema I, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

GIRLFIGHT
Diana Guzman (Michelle Rodriguez), a sullen, withdrawn Brooklyn girl who lives with a hapless, preening father (Paul Calderon) and an unformed younger brother (Ray Santiago), walks into a local gym where her brother boxes and at once feels at home. The trainers treat her with rough impersonality, which is exactly what she wants, and she struggles to channel her anger into the skills of a boxer. This small independent movie, written and directed by Karyn Kusama, is an attempt at rough-house feminist populism. At the end, it turns into a fairy tale as Diana falls for a beautiful young male boxer (Santiago Douglas) who adores her and her right hook, too. The movie may be naïve and underdone, but it has a new, live subject and, in Rodriguez, a powerhouse star who could go a long way.—*D.D.* (10/2/00) (Battery Park 16, State, and Union Square.)

HALLOWEEN
John Carpenter, who made this 1978 low-budget scare picture, has a visual sense of menace, but he isn't very gifted with actors. An escaped lunatic wielding a kitchen knife stalks people in a small Midwestern town, and that's about it. The film is largely just a matter of the camera tracking subjectively, from the mad killer's point of view, leading you to expect something awful to happen. But the camera also tracks subjectively when he isn't

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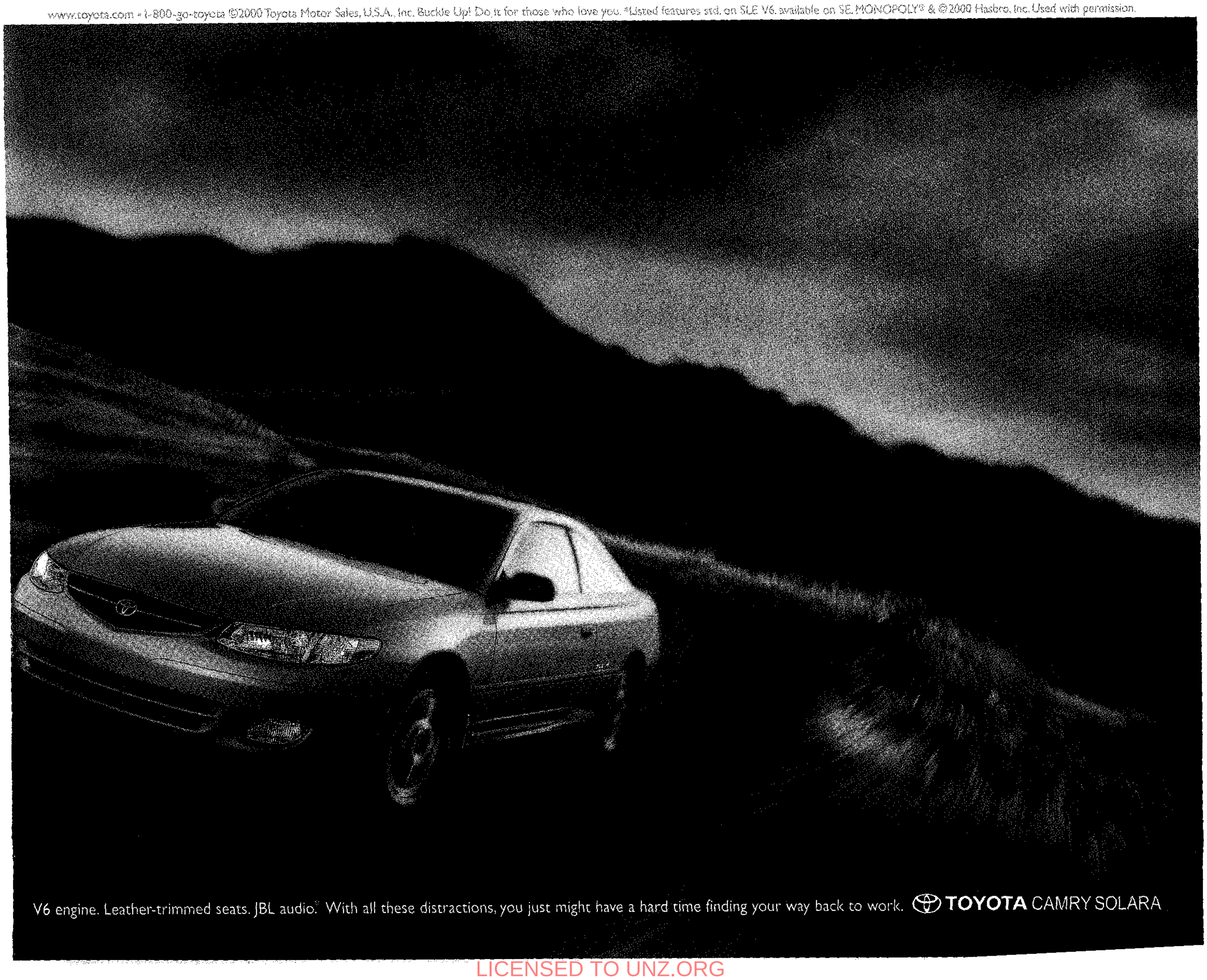
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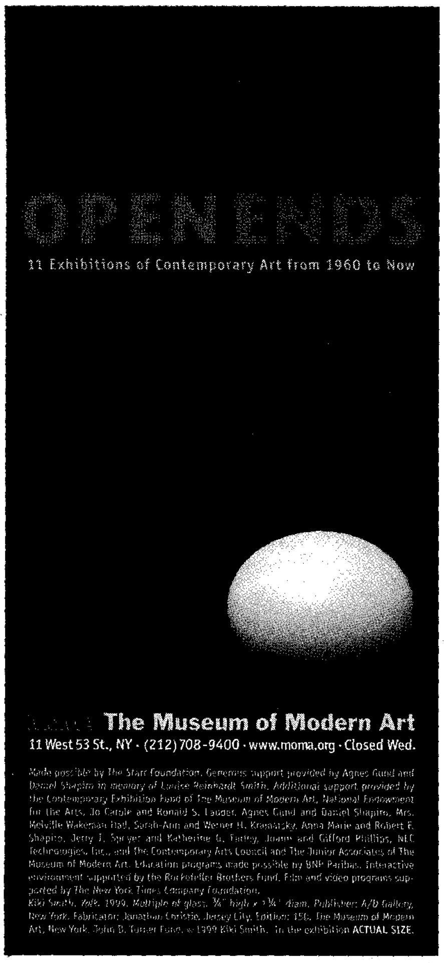
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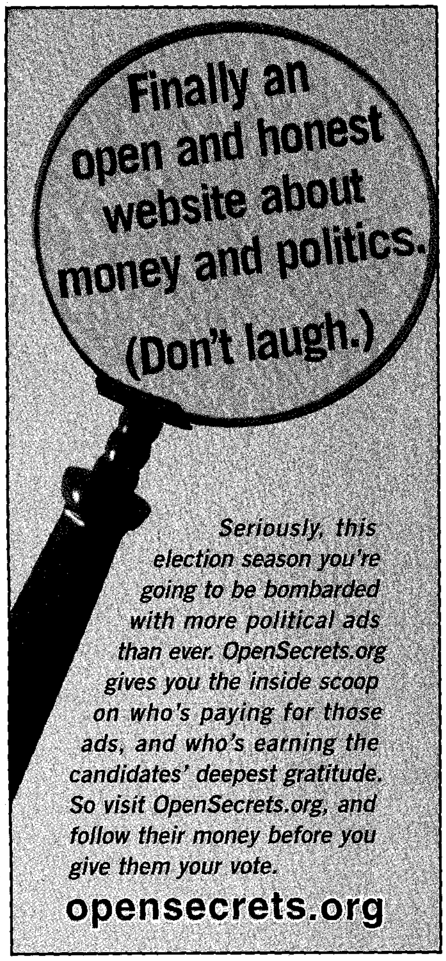
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around at all; in fact, there's so much subjective tracking you begin to think everyone in the movie has his own camera. "Halloween" keeps you nervous and jumpy rather than pleasurably excited. Yet it has been a huge box-office success, and a lot of people seem convinced it's a classic.—*Pauline Kael* (Pioneer.)

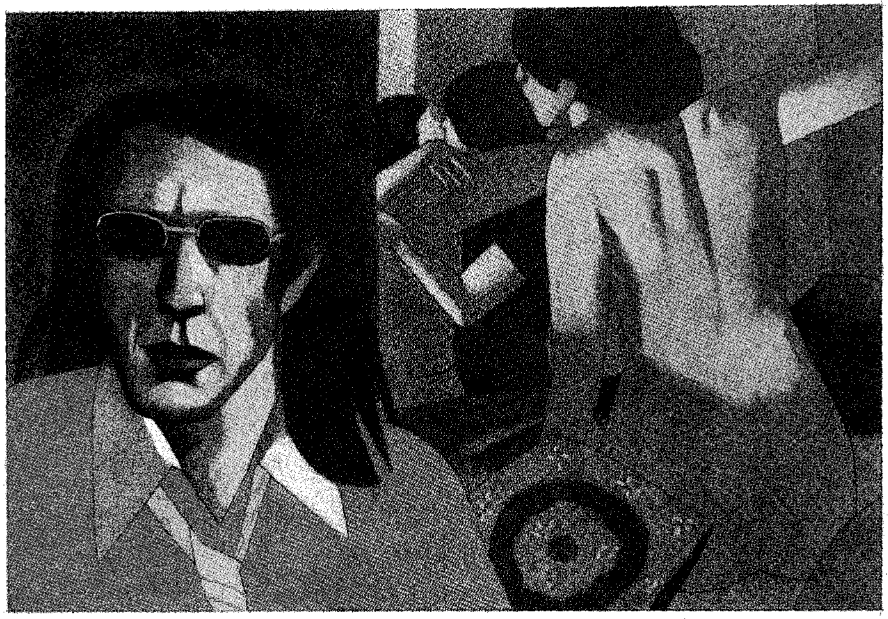
THE LADIES MAN
A movie that divides the world into those who think Afros are funny and those who do not. The "Saturday Night Live" comic Tim Meadows, as the lisping, lubricious radio host Leon Phelps, ambles through Chicago in leisure suits, dispensing his funkified prescriptions for love. The sophomoric humor serves up cheap laughs as the movie—the latest in Lorne Michaels's skit-to-silver-screen transplants—lolls around in shallow stereotypes.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin.)

THE LEGEND OF DRUNKEN MASTER
Jackie Chan in mint condition, fighting off an axe gang with a wooden bench in each hand. Colonial China as a place where even friends greet each other with a bit of fist play. These are the hallmarks of a classic kung-fu film. What surprises are the finely wrought scenes of Chinese daily life (the market, the train, the school courtyard) and the sprightly comic performance of Anita Mui as a mah-jongg-obsessed wife. Chan made this film in 1994 as an homage to "Drunken Master," the 1979 film that turned him into a star, and the final twenty-minute fight scene inside a steel mill is considered one of the genre's high-water marks. For this rerelease, the dialogue has been dubbed into English, and the mismatched mouths take you back to the Saturday-afternoon double features of days gone by.—*M.A.* (Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Gotham Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)

MEET THE PARENTS
Jay Roach moves on from the campy delights of the Austin Powers series to direct this smoothly acted comedy of errors. Ben Stiller plays a modern man charged with a Victorian task: asking his girlfriend's father for permission to marry his daughter. With a calamitous surname ("pronounced just like it's spelled, F-O-C-K-E-R") and a faintly hilarious profession (male nurse), Stiller seems like a sitting duck for the secretive, overprotective father, played by Robert De Niro. Stiller grovels, De Niro growls, and the girls (Blythe Danner and Teri Polo) watch from the sidelines. This is dumbed-up comedy: there are just enough unexpected moments to redeem all the easy pleasures of the slapstick.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE MOTHER AND THE WHORE
This controversial 1973 three-hour-and-thirty-minute film, produced, written, and directed by Jean Eustache, is about the aging young of the Left Bank, who live in an atmosphere of apocalyptic narcissism. Eustache's method resembles the static randomness of the Warhol-Morrissey pictures, but the randomness here is not a matter of indifference; it's a conscious goal. The actors—Jean-Pierre Léaud, Bernadette Lafont, Françoise Lebrun, Isabelle Weingarten, and Jacques Renard—were not allowed to deviate from the script, yet Eustache wants the look of chance. He tries to push viewers beyond patience—to rub our noses in his view of reality. Implicitly, he is saying, "I'm going to show you more of the tormented soul than anybody has ever shown you before." This soul belongs to a poor young nurse named Veronika, and the picture stands or falls on the viewer's attitude toward her recital of sexual humiliations. In French.—*P.K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Nov. 7-9.)

NURSE BETTY
A calm, sunny comedy from Neil LaBute, who is taking a break from the nastiness of previous work like "In the Company of Men." That was cinema as vivisection; this has its spasms of violence, but its target—disappointingly soft—is the delusion of ordinary folk. Betty (Renée Zellweger) is a wife and waitress who sees her husband (Aaron Eckhart) murdered in their Kansas home. In blithe mental confusion, she sets off for Los Angeles, pursued by the killers (Morgan Freeman and Chris Rock), to find a fictitious doctor—the supergroomed hero of a television soap. He is merely an actor (Greg Kinnear) who can't decide how to handle the unwavering force of her credulity. Zellweger strolls and simpers through the story, while Freeman falls in love with her from afar. LaBute wants to inspect their uncomprehending obsessions, but the film feels too flimsy to bear much satirical weight.—*A.L.* (9/11/00) (Battery Park 16 and Empire 25.)


At the Walter Reade Theatre, a complete retrospective of the films of Jean Eustache.

HERVÉ BLONDON

PAY IT FORWARD
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Coronet Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

POOR COW
A 1967 English film with Carole White as Joy, a young London barmaid who learns about life as she drifts from one thief to another. But she doesn't learn enough to keep one's attention from drifting in this ambitious but flat version of Nell Dunn's novel, directed by Ken Loach in a semi-documentary style. He uses the poor cow Joy as an

example of modern urban anomie. Joy is having a baby pulled out of her and is crying in pain as the movie opens, and Donovan is singing Christopher Logue's words: "Be not too hard / For life is short / And nothing is given to man . . . Be not too hard / For soon he'll die / Often no wiser than he began." So you can't say Loach hasn't warned you.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; Nov. 6.)

RATCATCHER

There are no cheap epiphanies in this interior, melancholy portrait of a boy growing up in a Glasgow housing project. The director Lynne Ramsay discovered William Eadie, an untrained actor, and she evokes a complete emotional consciousness from his open, enigmatic face. Her camera hews so closely to his world view that you become fully immersed in his sadness. The inexplicable tragedy that opens the film remains just that, and this lack of closure resonates long after the end credits.—*M.A.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

REQUIEM FOR A DREAM

Darren Aronofsky's new film stars Ellen Burstyn as Sara Goldfarb, a Brighton Beach widow who launches herself on a crash diet—a path that will lead to pill addiction and electroshock therapy. Meanwhile, her son Harry (Jared Leto) and his girlfriend, Marion (Jennifer Connelly), yield to the pull of hard drugs. No one in this picture seems to have any powers of resistance; who would have thought denizens of Brighton Beach would give up without a fight? Each of the characters is fenced in by solitude; Aronofsky divides them by split screen, and punches home their addiction with a blistering montage of pills, puffs, and widening eyes. All of this is managed with formidable skill, but it shuts the movie down, and the various junkies—even Burstyn, who gives the role everything she's got—end up looking less substantial than their respective poisons. A cautionary tale, maybe, but it gets a dangerous buzz from the aesthetics of a fix. The script was adapted from the novel by Hubert Selby, Jr., who appears as a ferrety prison guard.—*A.L.* (10/9/00) (84th Street Sixplex and Union Square.)

SOLAS

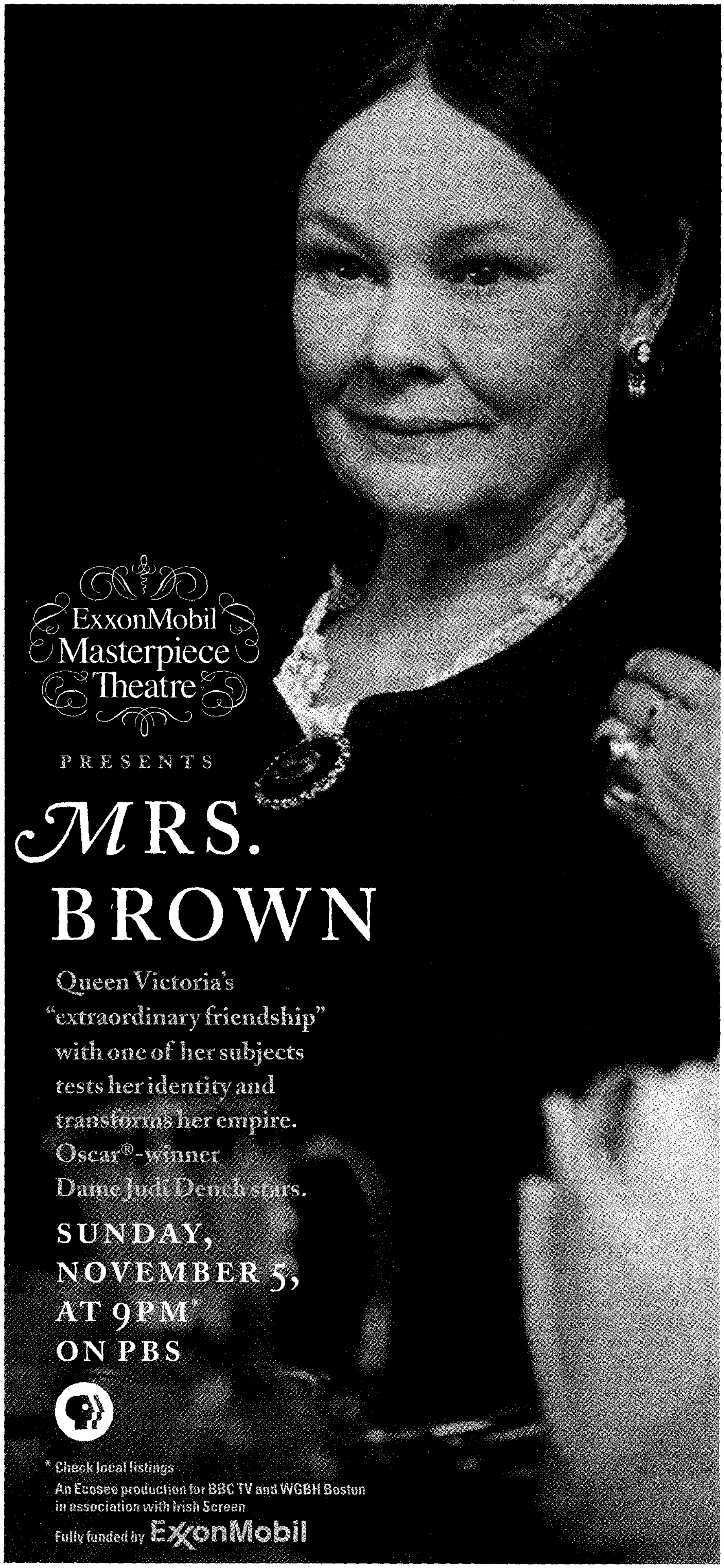
Pregnant and alone, a beautiful young woman named Maria (Ana Fernandez) has hidden herself in the ragged outskirts of a nameless Spanish city. Into this scene of urban isolation arrives Maria's mother, played by Maria Galina, and from the start she fills the screen with a radiant beneficence. Her village-bound, old-fashioned ways build a sense of community where there was none, and her unwavering devotion softens her daughter's jaundiced outlook. With each minute, the film lifts in spirit, and though it plays a familiar, sentimental melody it's still capable of generating some genuine pathos. When the director, Benito Zambrano, dedicates the film to his mother in the end credits, the effect of having watched a Hallmark card is complete. In Spanish.—*M.A.* (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

SOUTH

In 1914, the British explorer Ernest Shackleton, determined to be the first to cross the continent of Antarctica, led H.M.S. Endurance into frozen seas that stymied the ship's progress and then crushed it in shifting ice. A cinematographer named Frank Hurley was part of the crew, and he shot this awesomely beautiful eighty-minute documentary. The film doesn't tell a tidy narrative: how could it? Hurley and the rest were stuck for eight months and adrift for five, but "South" gives us visceral images unlike any other movie: the camera glides with the prow of the Endurance as it hovers over ice-encrusted water, and the frozen vessel glitters against the night in stark, haunting relief.—*Michael Sragow* (The Screening Room; Nov. 4-5.)

THIS SPORTING LIFE

Lindsay Anderson's 1963 movie about an inarticulate protagonist (Richard Harris), a professional rugby player, and a "bruised" woman (Rachel Roberts) was hailed as the best feature ever made in England—maybe because it suggests all sorts of passion and protest. Like Anderson's later work, it draws its considerable power from what one can only assume is unconscious and semiconscious material. The film is heavy with multiple meanings that the director doesn't sort out, and even the best se-



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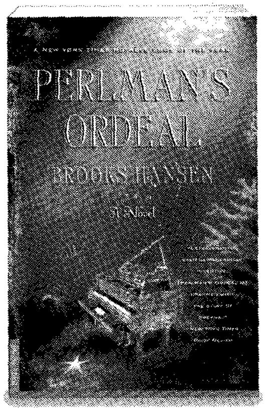

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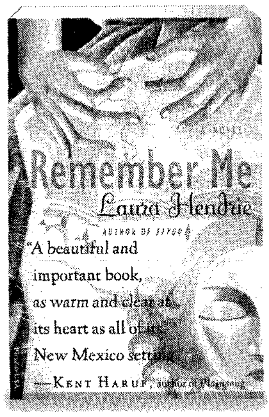
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quences are often baffling. The rugby games were said to be a "microcosm of a corrupt society," and you can certainly tell that the movie is meant to be bold and tragic. (It has something of the disturbing brute force of Scorsese's "Raging Bull.") It's a mixture of the powerful, the inexplicable, and the dislikable, with the hurt in Rachel Roberts' face lingering in the memory.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; Nov. 3-4.)

A TIME FOR DRUNKEN HORSES
The Northern Iran winters are so cold that the Kurdish smugglers who live there feed their mules alcohol so that they will carry loads over the mountain passes. In this world of high-risk border crossings and death by land mine, a fatherless young boy named Ayoub scrapes out a living doing odd tasks, supporting his sisters and crippled brother. This may seem like a recipe for seventy-seven minutes of misery, but the director Bahman Ghobadi's affection for his subjects gives the film a certain lightness. He takes the raw materials of his homeland—the harsh landscape, communal rooms, and lambent-eyed children—and fashions a visual poem. Ghobadi documents his subjects without intruding, and the results are quietly enthralling. In Kurdish.—*M.A.* (State.)

ALSO PLAYING

ANIMAL FACTORY
Cinema Village.

THE BRIDGE
Paris.

CALLE 54
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

THE EXORCIST
Battery Park 16, 59th Street East Cinema, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, and Union Square.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and The Screening Room.

LIVE NUDE GIRLS UNITE!
Quad Cinema.

LUCKY NUMBERS
Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.

ONCE IN THE LIFE
BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, and Union Square.

REMEMBER THE TITANS
Battery Park 16, Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.

A ROOM FOR ROMEO BRASS
Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza.

SING-ALONG SOUND OF MUSIC
Waverly 1 and 2.

SOUND AND FURY
Film Forum.

STARDOM
Quad Cinema and 64th and 2nd.

TWO FAMILY HOUSE
BAM Rose Cinemas, The Screening Room, and 64th and 2nd.

VENUS BEAUTY INSTITUTE
Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.

THE YARDS (10/30/00)
Angelika Film Center, Chelsea West, Cinema II, and Lincoln Square.

YI YI (A ONE AND A TWO)
Film Forum.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St. (945-3418).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Dec. 3: "Visions of New York: Films from the 1960's Underground." Nov. 4 at 2: "Blonde Cobra" (1959-63, Ken Jacobs) and "Flaming Creatures" (1963, Jack Smith). ♦ Nov. 4 at 4: "Echoes of Silence" (1965, Peter Goldman). ♦ Nov. 5 at 2: "Empire" (1964, Andy Warhol) and "Scorpio Rising" (1963, Kenneth Anger). ♦ Nov. 5 at 3:30: "The Last Clean Shirt" (1964, Alfred Leslie). ♦ Nov. 5 at 4:30: "The Queen of Sheba Meets the Atom Man" (1963, Ron Rice). ♦ Classic movies. Nov. 4-5 at 6:30: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Through Nov. 8: A Pier Paolo Pasolini retrospective. Unless otherwise noted, all films are in Italian, with English subtitles. Nov. 1 at 7: "The Decameron" (1970). ♦ Nov. 1 at 9:30: "The Canterbury Tales" (1971). ♦ Nov. 3 at 8:30: "The Arabian Nights" (1973). ♦ Nov. 4 at 9:30: "Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom" (1975). ♦ Nov. 6 at 7: "Hawks and Sparrows" (1965). ♦ Nov. 6 at 9: "Notes for a Film About India" (1967). ♦ Nov. 7 at 7: "Accattone" (1961). ♦ Nov. 7 at 9:30: "Pigsty" (1968).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—Nov. 1 at 6:50 and 9:30: "An Actor's Revenge"

(1963, Kon Ichikawa; in Japanese). ♦ Through Nov. 12: A retrospective of films by the Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien. Nov. 2 at 4, 6:45, and 9:30: "A Time to Live and a Time to Die" (1985; in Taiwanese). ♦ Nov. 3 at 7:15 and 9:40 and Nov. 5 at 2, 7, and 9:20: "Flowers of Shanghai" (1998; in Mandarin). ♦ Nov. 4 at 2 and 7:15: "City of Sadness" (1989; in Mandarin, Taiwanese, and Japanese). ♦ Nov. 5 at 4:20 and Nov. 6 at 4, 6:35, and 9:20: "The Puppetmaster" (1993; in Mandarin and Taiwanese). ♦ Nov. 7 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Written Face" (1995, Daniel Schmid; in Japanese).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Nov. 30: "The British New Wave: From Angry Young Men to Swinging London." Nov. 1 at 2 and 6:45: "Séance on a Wet Afternoon" (1964, Bryan Forbes). ♦ Nov. 1 at 4:10 and 9: "The L-Shaped Room" (1963, Forbes). ♦ Nov. 2 at 1:20, 5:25, and 9:30: "Term of Trial" (1962, Peter Glenville). ♦ Nov. 2 at 3:40 and 7:45: "The Angry Silence" (1960, Guy Green). ♦ Nov. 3-4 at 3:10 and 7:15: "This Sporting Life" (†). ♦ Nov. 3-4 at 1:30, 5:35, and 9:40: "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning" (1960, Karel Reisz). ♦ Nov. 5 at 1, 4:30, and 8: "Georgy Girl" (1966, Silvio Narizzano). ♦ Nov. 5 at 2:50, 6:20, and 9:50: "The Girl with Green Eyes" (1964, Desmond Davis). ♦ Nov. 6 at 1:30, 5:30, and 9:30: "Poor Cow" (†). ♦ Nov. 6 at 3:25 and 7:30: "The Leather Boys" (1963, Sidney J. Furie). ♦ Nov. 7 at 1, 4, 7, and 10: "If . . ." (1968, Lindsay Anderson). ♦ Nov. 7 at 3, 6, and 9: "The White Bus" (1966, Anderson).

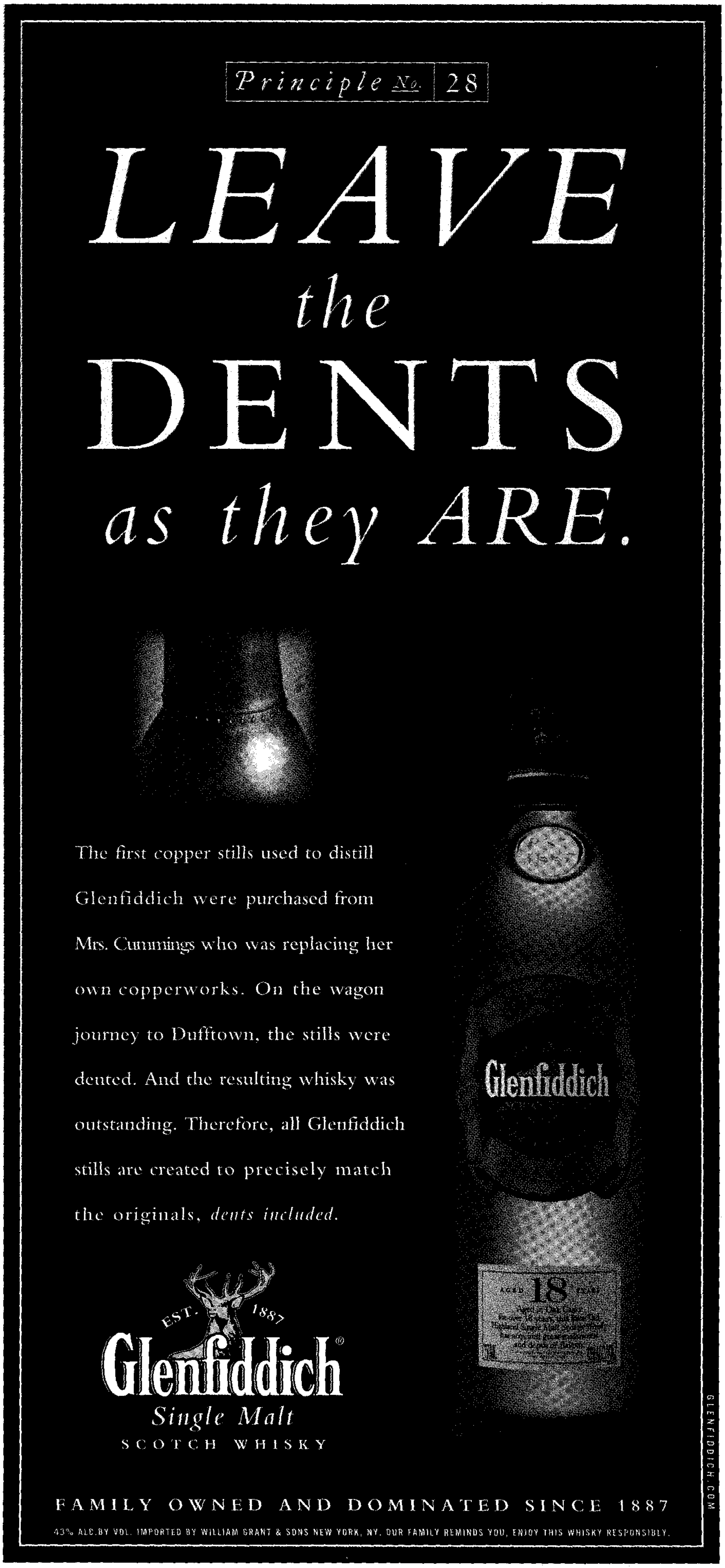
THE MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL
American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The festival runs Nov. 3-11, includes over seventy films, and features the work of the Indian director Mira Nair and the nature films of Jean Painlevé.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through Nov. 19: "Germany 2000: New Films." All films are in German with English subtitles. Nov. 2 at 2:30 and Nov. 3 at 8:15: "Tuvalu" (1999, Veit Helmer). ♦ Nov. 2 at 6 and Nov. 4 at 2: "Marlene" (2000, Joseph Vilsmaier). ♦ Nov. 3 at 2:30 and Nov. 5 at 5: "After the Fall" (1999, Frauke Sandig). ♦ Nov. 3 at 6 and Nov. 7 at 2:30: "Manila" (2000, Romauld Karmakar). ♦ Nov. 4 at 5 and Nov. 6 at 2:30: "A Handful of Grass" (1999, Roland Suso Richter). ♦ Nov. 5 at 2 and Nov. 6 at 6: "The Queen—Marian Hoppe" (1999, Werner Schroeter). ♦ Nov. 7 at 6: "Amerika" (2000, Jens Jenson).

THE SCREENING ROOM
54 Varick St. (334-2100)—Classic Hong Kong action films. Nov. 3-4 at midnight: "Zu: Warriors from the Magic Mountain" (1983, Tsui Hark; in Cantonese). ♦ Nov. 4-5 at 1: "South" (†).

SYMPHONY SPACE
2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (864-5400)—Through Nov. 28: "Empires of Passion: The Cinema of Obsession." Nov. 7 at 7: "The Bridge on the River Kwai" (1957, David Lean).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Nov. 9: "Jean Eustache Retrospective: Blue-Collar Dandy." The French filmmaker achieved renown with his bohemian epic "The Mother and the Whore." This series features his lesser-known, equally influential work. All films are in French. Nov. 1 at 1 and 6:15, Nov. 3 at 3:45 and 8:40, and Nov. 4 at 4:10 and 9:30: "Une Sale Histoire" (1977), "Santa Claus Has Blue Eyes" (1966), and "Les Mauvaises Fréquentations" (1963). ♦ Nov. 1 at 3:45 and 9, Nov. 4 at 7, Nov. 5 at 6:15, and Nov. 7 at 5: "Mes Petites Amoureuses" (1974). ♦ Nov. 2 and Nov. 6 at 1 and 6: "Les Ministères de l'Art" (1988) and "La Peine Perdue de Jean Eustache" (1997, Angel Diaz). ♦ Nov. 2 and Nov. 6 at 3:15 and 8:15: "La Rosière de Pessac" (1968/1979). ♦ Nov. 3 at 1:30 and 6:30 and Nov. 5 at 4:10 and 8:45: "Hieronymous Bosch's Garden of Delights" (1979), "Les Photos d'Alix" (1980), and "Le Cochon" (1970). ♦ Nov. 7 at 1 and 7:20 and Nov. 8-9 at 1 and 7: "The Mother and the Whore" (†).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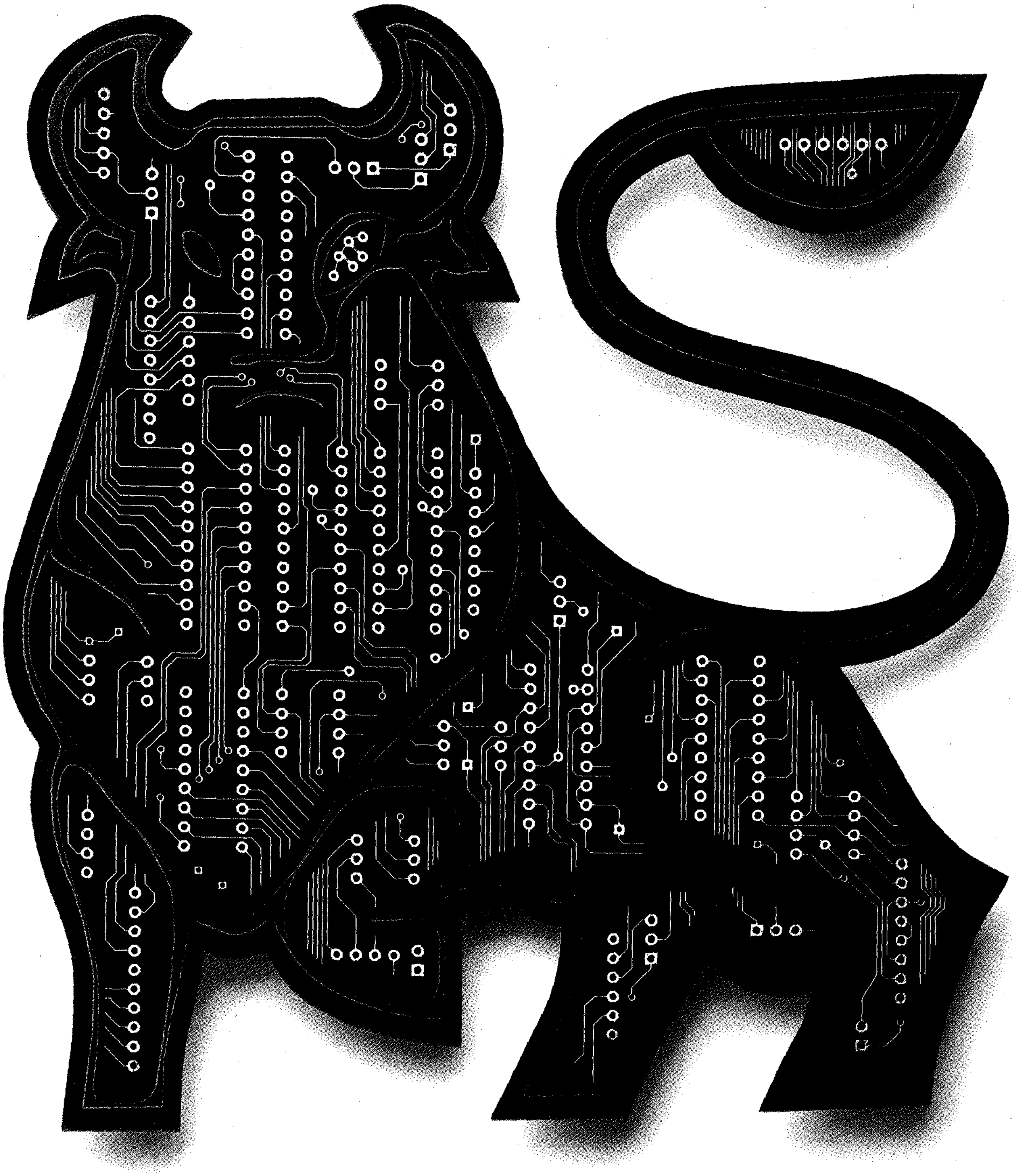

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
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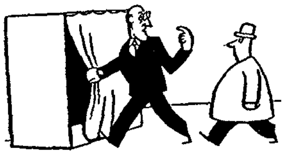
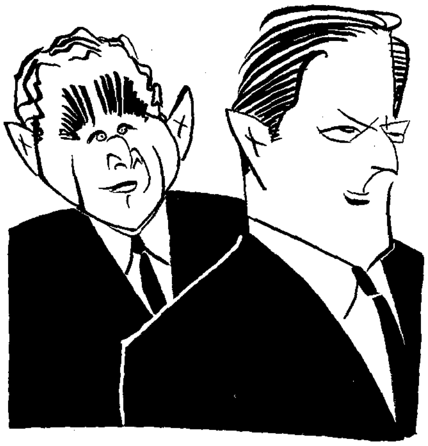


After the polls close next week, we will learn what Presidential politics in the year 2000 has been "about." Specifically, we will learn whether it has been about "issues" or about "personality." Meanwhile, a scorecard.

If the campaign turns out to have been about "issues," then the Democratic nominee, Al Gore, will be elected, because he is the superior candidate in point of both command and positions. Positions, of course, are a matter of opinion. And the opinion here is that Vice-President Gore has shown himself to be, in comparison with the Republican candidate, George W. Bush, more fiscally responsible (because he proposes to spend somewhat less of the chimerical surplus than does Governor Bush), more socially responsible (because he proposes to spend more of that surplus on social needs such as education and health care and divert less of it to individual consumption), and more egalitarian (because his plans for changing the tax code, combined with his spending plans, would ameliorate inequalities of wealth and income while Bush's would exacerbate them). To judge from the little that has been said during the campaign about America's relations with the rest of the world, Gore's foreign policy would be more energetic in its promotion of democratic values than Bush's, and probably more so than President Clinton's. Bush has offered few clues to what his foreign policy might be, except to say that he would build a missile-defense system whether or not it was technically workable or strategically advantageous and that he opposes the American military presence in Haiti (where, at last count, we had twenty-nine soldiers) and in the Balkans, where a unilateral withdrawal would have the effect of weakening the Western alliance and America's role within it. As for the superiority of Gore's command of the issues, this is not a matter of opinion—or, if it is, everyone's opinion is the same, even (to judge from his defensive jokes) Bush's: Gore knows more, understands more, and has thought more, and more coherently, about virtually every aspect of public policy, domestic and foreign, than Bush has.



On experience, which occupies a space somewhere between issues and personality, Gore is also the superior candidate. Bush's experience for all but six years of his adult life has been as a failed businessman in the Texas oil patch, and then as an arguably successful businessman in professional baseball (not exactly a cutting-edge industry), where his role was that of a front man and his business success due largely to family connections and the use of public funds and the state's power of eminent domain in building a stadium. His sole foray into public life is the six years he has spent as governor of Texas—a weak office, which he has held during an unchallenging period cushioned by unprecedented national prosperity. Gore's experience, twenty-four years of it as an elected government official at the national level, has been intense and, it is fair to say, distinguished. His experience compares favorably with that of anyone newly elected to the Presidency for at least the past century and is inferior only to that of incumbent Presidents running for reëlection, and not all of them. Gore showed initiative and creativity as a senator on environmental and strategic issues, and has done so as Vice-President in the areas of foreign policy and improving governmental efficiency. By all accounts he has been an active and successful Vice-President, perhaps the best in the country's history.

Bush's point of superiority, then, is in the matter of "personality," and it is striking how narrowly that word seems to

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

have been defined for electoral purposes. Personality apparently excludes, if not intelligence itself, then such manifestations of it as intellectual curiosity, analytic ability, and a capacity for original thought, all of which Gore has in abundance and Bush not only lacks but scorns. Personality apparently excludes courage, which Gore, at least in comparison with Bush, also possesses. Gore put himself in harm's way during the Vietnam War; Bush did not. And Gore showed political courage, to a modest but discernible degree, when as a senator he voted to support the Gulf War and engaged the question of strategic arms in a heterodox way that went beyond the well-meaning simplicities of the nuclear-freeze movement. When he did these things it was clear that he might be putting his national political future at risk. Bush, as has been noted before in this space, has helped move the Republican Party away from antigovernment extremism and toward an acknowledgment of a degree of social responsibility. But these were obvious, and politically cost-free, moves in light of the collapse of the Gingrich revolution and the political and policy triumphs of Clintonism. Bush's main rival for the Republican nomination, John McCain, would actually have moved the Party further in the same direction.

"Personality" is the descendant of what used to be called, back in the old days two or three months ago, "character." And character has seemed to mean, first, a disinclination to embarrass the country through spectacularly foolish sexual indiscretions, and, second, credibility. Bush and his running mate, Dick Cheney, have tried to get some mileage out of the first—how else can one interpret their solemn promises to restore "dignity" to the White House? (Gore's displays of sexual enthusiasm, though arguably indiscreet, are inarguably marital; and, if anything, he would make the country heartily sick of dignity.) But less was heard about dignity as the campaign progressed, and the Republican ticket's big focus shifted to credibility. Gore's tendency to embellish anecdotes, especially about himself, is real and undeniable. Even so, some of his alleged lies have turned out to be strongly rooted in factuality. He did not "create" the Internet, obviously, but he was one of a tiny handful of politicians who grasped its significance when it was in its infancy, and he did take the lead in writing legislation to spur its development. He and Tipper weren't the models for Oliver Barrett IV and Jennifer Cavilleri, in "Love Story," but the young Albert Gore, Jr., was, according to the novel's author, Erich Segal, one of two models for Ollie. (Tipper, who is feisty but not Italian-American, was not a model for Jenny.) Other errors of Gore's have been insignificant or superfluous, such as his anecdote about a girl who had no desk in her science class of thirty-six students. It turned out that the desk shortage was limited to the day on which the photograph Gore saw was taken. The fact remains that a class of thirty-six is too large for effective teaching.

What gives the theme of Gore as liar its power is the cautionary example of Clinton's impeachable (if not convictable) falsehoods about the Monica Lewinsky episode; if it weren't for that, Gore's exaggerations, such as they are, might not even have been noticed, and there would almost certainly have been no attempt to paint him as a liar. Because of the Clinton factor, Gore's exaggerations are seen as a moral problem. In the debates, Bush uttered inaccuracies that, unlike Gore's, falsify the underlying essence of his point—as, for example, when he said that Gore was outspending him in the campaign (when the reverse is true, to the tune of fifty million dollars) and that he fought to get a patients' bill of rights passed in Texas (when he actually vetoed one such bill and allowed another to become law without his signature), and that his health-care proposal would "have prescription drugs as an integral part of Medicare" (when this is precisely what Gore's plan would do, while Bush's would dismantle Medicare as we know it in favor of a system of subsidized private insurance). But these untruths have generally been chalked up to ignorance, not mendacity. It's the same with Bush's boast that, guess what, Texas is going to put three of James Byrd's killers to death, when the actual number slated for execution in that case is two. It is generally agreed that Bush did not realize that he was exaggerating; he was just a little fuzzy on the math. So he was not "lying" (though some of his hearers felt a moral chill all the same).

Apart from the mostly specious matter of credibility, "personality" comes down to likability. And likability is not even a matter of opinion; it is a matter of taste. Hard as it may be to believe, there are people here and there on the planet Earth who actually like Al Gore, and there may even be one or two who wonder if George W. Bush might not be such a nice guy after all. Still, there's no denying that a large number of people find Gore irritating; to prove it, there are polls, to say nothing of the panels of "undecided voters"—that is, clueless, ill-informed citizens who even at this late date cannot summon the mental energy to make up their minds—assembled by the television networks into on-camera focus groups. Gore can be awkward and tone-deaf, and he sometimes has trouble modulating his presentation of himself, and he plainly lacks the instinctive political exuberance of a Bill Clinton or even the slightly twitchy easygoingness of a George W. Bush. Gore is aggressive, assertive, and intensely energetic, qualities once counted as desirable in a potential President but now evidently seen by many as disturbing. At a time of domestic prosperity and tranquillity, when the United States has few mortal enemies and none that are capable of presenting an existential threat, much of the public seems to have developed a thirst for passivity, a thirst that Bush is eager to slake. This may explain the paradox that while Gore was widely judged the substantive winner of all three of the candidates' televised debates, and certainly the first and third of them, he lost the battle in the post-debate media echo chambers and, perhaps partly as a result, in the opinion polls. In the final debate, Gore stretched the rules (within the bounds of civility, but still), while Bush complained and turned beseechingly to the moderator for help. To caricature them both, Gore was a smart bully, Bush a hapless tattletale. Neither attribute is attractive, but it may turn out that fear of the first will outweigh contempt for the second. In that case, "personality" will definitively have triumphed over "issues," and the transformation of the Presidency of the United States into the presidency of the student council will be complete.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

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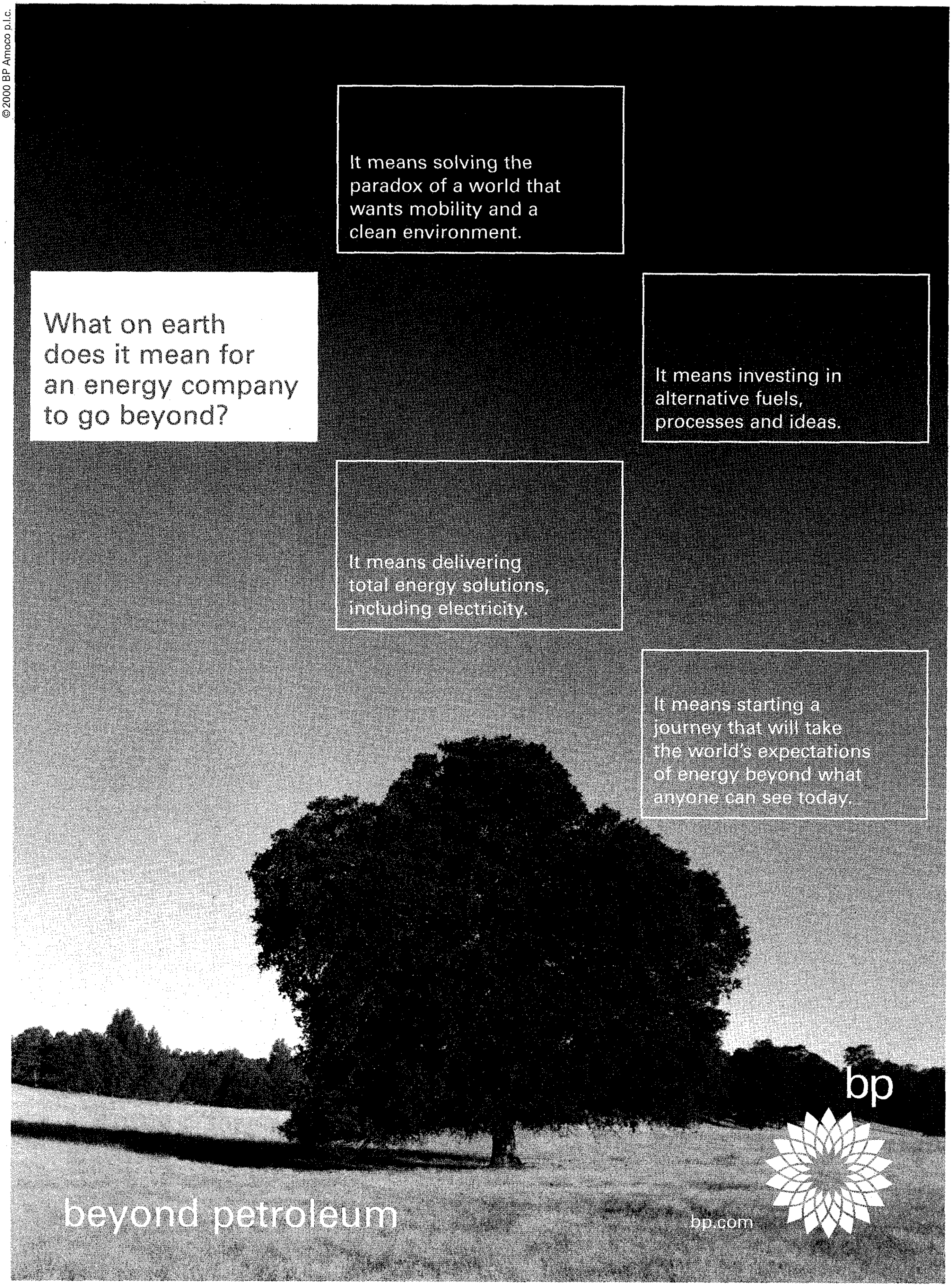

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THE SPORTING LIFE
THE GOODEST GUYS

Sometime after midnight, Joe Torre walked slowly into a low-slung "media room" in the bowels of Shea Stadium carrying a flute of champagne. He held his glass with pinkie-out panache, as if he had trained all his life for a role in "Design for Living," but his face registered nothing like serenity or elation. His jowls slumped, his eyes were funereal, red-rimmed. He'd been crying for a while now, unashamed, burying his face in the crook of his arm, hugging his wife, his players, even George Steinbrenner (what a man must do!). Now he eased into his chair with an exhausted old-guy sigh. It was as if this victory—leading the Yankees to their third straight World Series title, the first team to three-peat since the Oakland A's did it, twenty-six years ago—were merely a relief, the relief of not failing.

Where was the crowing? Where was the joy? Even now, flanked by Andy Pettitte, who had pitched the night through with such intelligence and gall, and Luis Sojo, the lumpy role player who'd whacked home the winning runs off Al Leiter in the top of the ninth, Torre focussed most keenly not on the highlights, the big hits, but, rather, on the game's slender margins. His hair slick with Mumm's and Bud, the shampoo of champions, he sensed the abyss. With two out in the bottom of the ninth, the Yanks leading 4–2, and a man on base for the Mets, Mike Piazza had cracked one to center field off the most indomitable man on the Yankee payroll, Mariano Rivera.

"I screamed, 'No!'" Torre said. "It was probably the most scared I've been."

Only when Bernie Williams trotted back nearly to the warning track, looked up into the cool hazy night for the ball, and found it spinning into his glove for the last out—only then could Torre afford to think something other than the worst.

"Anytime Piazza hits a ball in the air, it's a home run in my mind," he said.

It was infinitely worse, of course, down the hall. One after another—Piazza, Leiter, Benny, Fonzie—the Mets tromped heavily through Shea's tunnels. They had that vacant, battle-weary stare you see in First World War prints. They didn't speak, didn't acknowledge their wives, their heartbroken kids. Their steel spikes clicked on the concrete floor.

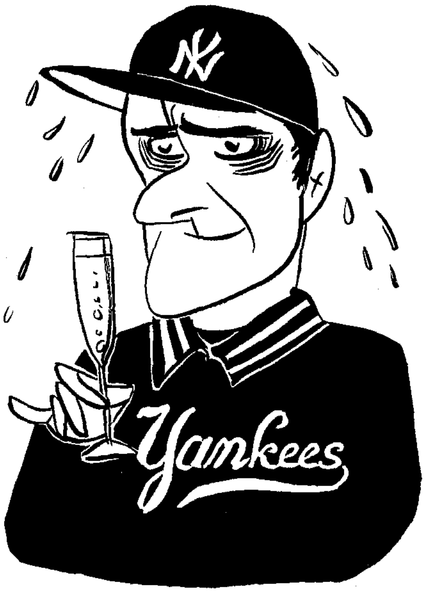
Bobby Valentine, the Mets manager, answered for them all, but he blamed only himself. He'd left his pitcher in too long. Leiter, like all true starters, had promised his manager everlasting endurance, and so Valentine followed his heart and not the cold logic of the scorecard. "I was wrong," Valentine said. "It was the wrong decision, obviously. If I'd brought somebody else in, they definitely would have gotten the guy out, and we'd still be playing." And then he walked off and hugged the Mets co-owner, Fred Wilpon, hugged him hard, a terrible embrace.

They're amazing, these scenes. No one's died, everyone's rich, it's a kid's game, and yet . . . For a few minutes, for the cameras, partly out of joy, partly from a sense of ritual, the winners douse each other with champagne. They drench the mayor, toast the owner. But it breaks up pretty quickly, and even some of the players, most of them not yet as careworn as Torre, look strung-out, overtired, impatient to go home. It was as if they were beginning to realize that the smell coming up from the locker-room rug was worse than a frat house on a Sunday morning. Enough. "Can't a guy get a shower around here?" Derek Jeter said. It was time to go get lost.

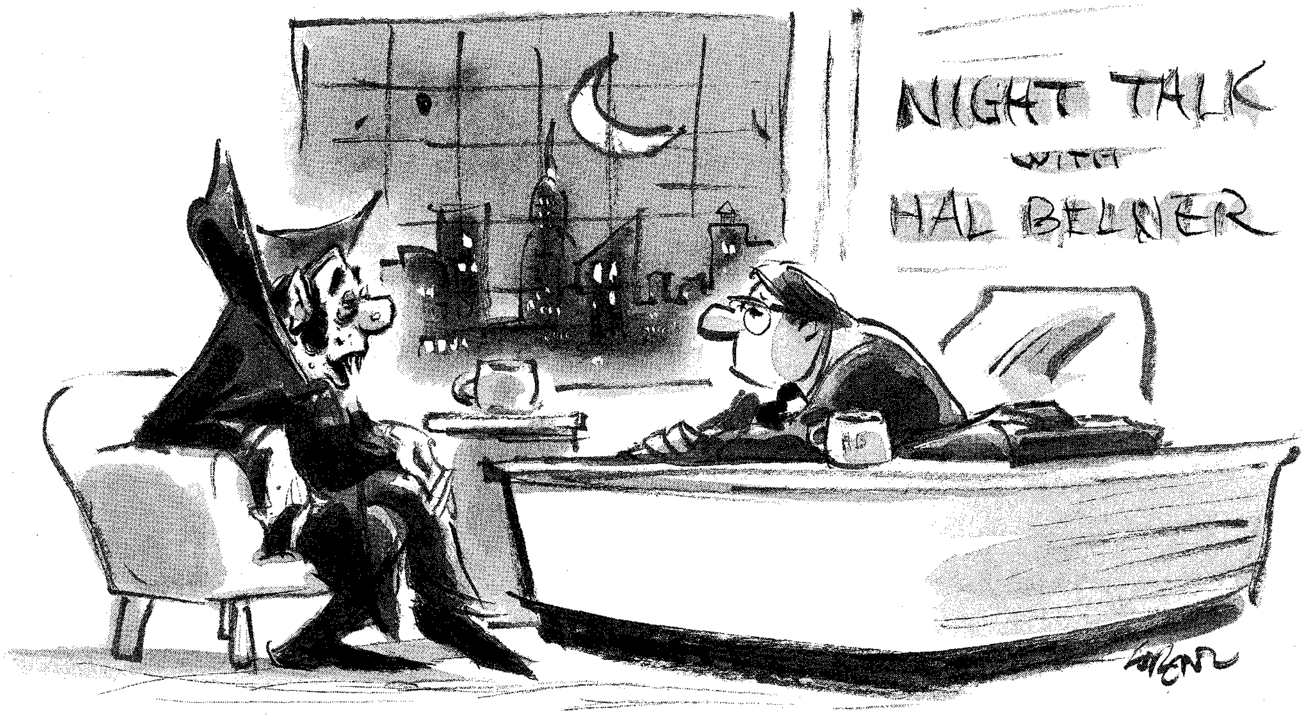
Roger Clemens tore back the plastic sheeting that covered his locker, grabbed his pants, and said to no one in particular, "This champagne is burning my eyes." And that was pretty much all he'd said in days.

Like it or not, the lasting image of this World Series will undoubtedly be that of Clemens winging that broken bat back at Piazza in the first inning of Game Two. Aesthetes and true fans everywhere will prefer to talk into the night about the more elevated moments: how two of the most brilliant pitching performances of the Series—El Duque's in Game Three and Leiter's in Game Five—were, in fact, defeats; we'll look to Paul O'Neill's triples and masterfully long at-bats, to his helmet-slamming moments of frustration even as he hit for a Series average of .474. But the broken-bat tape is forever. Baseball's Zapruder film, some of the TV guys called it. The next morning, Don Imus was on WFAN joking about the "second-bat theory" and some columnists were talking in terms of a psychotic episode. In the *News*, Mike Lupica referred to Clemens and his "Mike Tyson moment." Some beat writers and columnists for the dailies even felt that Piazza and the Mets had betrayed the imperatives of retribution and machismo in failing to rush the mound and pummel the pulp out of Clemens. "Meek the Mets" was the headline over Wallace Matthews's attack in the *Post*.

The sanest reaction, I thought, came from Piazza himself. For World Series week, Piazza had agreed to an old tabloid tradition. He would "write" a daily column for the *Post;* that is, he would let the paper run his postgame quotes in the form of a bylined article. He was angry, but mainly he was bewildered by the "bizarre" incident; most of all, he resented that the press was asking him why he had not gone after Clemens. Grow up, Piazza counselled the hysterics: "The situation happened. It's done. Argue it left and right. O.K., should I go out and bleeping kill the guy? It's the World bleeping Series and I get suspended, now I can't bleeping play in the World Series. So I go out and kill the guy, I'm bleeping selfish and I look like a hero to some guys. Meanwhile we go out and bleeping lose the World Series 'cause I'm suspended for a couple of games. Anybody else who is not in that position doesn't know what the bleep they're talking about. Sorry about the bleeps. The more I write, the more emotional I get." (Join the bleeping club, Mike.)



Joe Torre



"This year, Hal, we've decided to concentrate on a few close races, where the undead vote could be decisive."

• •

"Emotion" was the very word Clemens used to describe his (a) confusion, (b) transgression, (c) regression, (d) all of the above. Ever since Clemens beaned Piazza in July, the great tabloid narrative had been building to this confrontation. He was in a frazzle prior to the game and worse when the first inning ended. Before coming out for the second, Clemens was like an overwrought kid giving himself a "timeout": he went off to a special room to be alone and settle down.

Clemens is thirty-eight now, and he has been tightly wound for as long as he has been in the majors. Lupica's Tyson analogy—with its hint of gnawed-upon ears—is extreme, but Clemens does gear up for his starts like a fighter. To strengthen his hands, he fills a big bowl with uncooked rice and squeezes handfuls of it. His house is filled with exercise machines. Every time he pitches, he comes close to destroying his arm. His freezer is loaded with bags of ice that he uses to stem the inflammation. When Clemens was pitching for the Red Sox, the team's physical therapist, Rich Zawacki, said, "I've never seen a pitcher whose body breaks down the way his does in a game. . . . Basically, we wind up piecing him back together from game to game." And that was ten years ago. "If someone met me on a game day, he wouldn't like me," Clemens told *Sports Illustrated* back then, and things haven't changed at all. "The days in between, I'm the goodest guy you can find. On the day of a game? If I'm watching television with you, I'm not hearing you, and I'm not hearing the television. . . . I want to be relentless. I want to pound guys. Once you pound guys, everything is quicker. I know how it is. I know how I felt those times when I started out against Nolan Ryan or Tom Seaver or Dwight Gooden. I know how guys feel when they face me now."

The rest of the country, or much of it, according to the TV ratings, thought of the Subway Series as the ballyard equivalent of the Iran-Iraq war: "A pox on 'em both." "At least, one New York team has to lose." That sort of thing. And, truth be told, there were moments that you didn't necessarily want aired west of the Hudson. It was not a source of great pride, for example, to see the governor, George Pataki, sitting in his box at Game One wearing a Yankee sweatshirt and taking as his ballpark refreshment . . . white wine. Nor was there any happy explanation for the way some Yankee fans discovered a rationale for booing Piazza every time he came to bat.

But there were countless true fans, crazed fans, intelligent fans everywhere, all over the city. For Game Five, at Shea, I sat up in the mezzanine near the left-field foul pole. I had on my right a friend who saw his first World Series game in 1941, the Mickey Owen dropped-third-strike game. He had the equanimity of his years, dividing his admiration between O'Neill's twilight struggles and Leiter's march to Waterloo. On my left was a Mets fan, one Joyce Mandelkern, of Port Washington, Long Island, whose comments to her husband all night were so quick and insightful, and whose emotions were so raw, that I couldn't resist getting to know her. She told me that when she watched the Mets at home she turned off the sound to keep the tension at a manageable level, and that when things got out of control she'd go to her garage and sit in the car.

"Sometimes, it's just too unbearable," she said.

The awful moment came Thursday night at 11:42 P.M. Top of the ninth. Yankees up. Men on first and second. Luis Sojo at bat. Al Leiter readied himself on the mound. Joyce Mandelkern of Port Washington buried her face in her arm.

"I can't watch this!" she said.

Then came the pitch.

—*David Remnick*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE
THE FUEL-CELL SELL

On the fourth floor of the new office building at 4 Times Square—which happens to be the home of this magazine—sit two steel boxes, each the size of a Ryder truck. The boxes emit a hum quieter than your normal speaking voice. Inside each box are two hundred and fifty-six stacked graphite plates containing phosphoric acid and a device that can extract hydrogen from natural gas. By causing a chemical reaction between the hydrogen and the oxygen in the air, the boxes generate four hundred kilowatts of electricity, enough to bathe bleary-eyed editors in silvery fluorescent light.

The boxes are called fuel cells, and they're far cleaner and more efficient than car engines, diesel generators, or conventional power plants. Fuel cells promise to change everything from the cars we drive to the electricity we waste. But even though the rudiments of fuel-cell technology have been around for a century and a half, we've taken only halting steps toward turning the fuel cell into a mass-market device. Here we are, in the midst of the greatest economy in the country's history, more convinced than ever of the virtues of technological innovation, and yet fuel cells are still struggling to get out of the lab. What gives?

The simplest answer is that fuel cells have been trapped in a chicken-and-egg predicament. Like most technologies in their early stages, they are very expensive, and will continue to be for some time. You have to build factories from scratch, and it takes a while for economies of scale to kick in. (That's why VCRs, when they first came out, cost thousands of dollars.) The initial market for fuel cells will be small, both because they're expensive and because they're up against well-established—although inferior—products like, oh, the internal-combustion engine. Fuel cells will get cheaper as manufacturers make more of them. But manufacturers won't make more as long as the market remains small.

Typically, there are two ways out of this predicament: "technology push" or "market pull." In the first case, you create a cool new technology and try to persuade people that they need it. This is not always easy. Market pull tends to work better. A problem arises, and companies race to invest in a profitable solution. Fuel cells have been trapped in "technology push" hell for most of their history. Now that's changing. The triumph of the free market? Not exactly. If fuel cells come to rule, it will be the result of a curious hybrid of government regulation and consumer demand.

This is how it's going to work. Fuel cells will first reach a mass market as replacements for traditional automobile engines. DaimlerChrysler and Ford have invested heavily in fuel-cell technology, while smaller companies, like Ballard Power Systems and International Fuel Cells, have solved many of the technological riddles that have kept fuel-cell cars off the road. By the middle of this decade, people driving fuel-cell cars will be sitting in traffic with the rest of us. In turn, cars will serve as a springboard for all the other uses of fuel cells, because, as more of them are made, prices will fall and the technology will improve. But the car market would not exist without new pollution regulations, especially California's requirement that by 2003 ten per cent of all automobiles sold be "zero-emission." Here the government is effectively jump-starting the fuel-cell market.

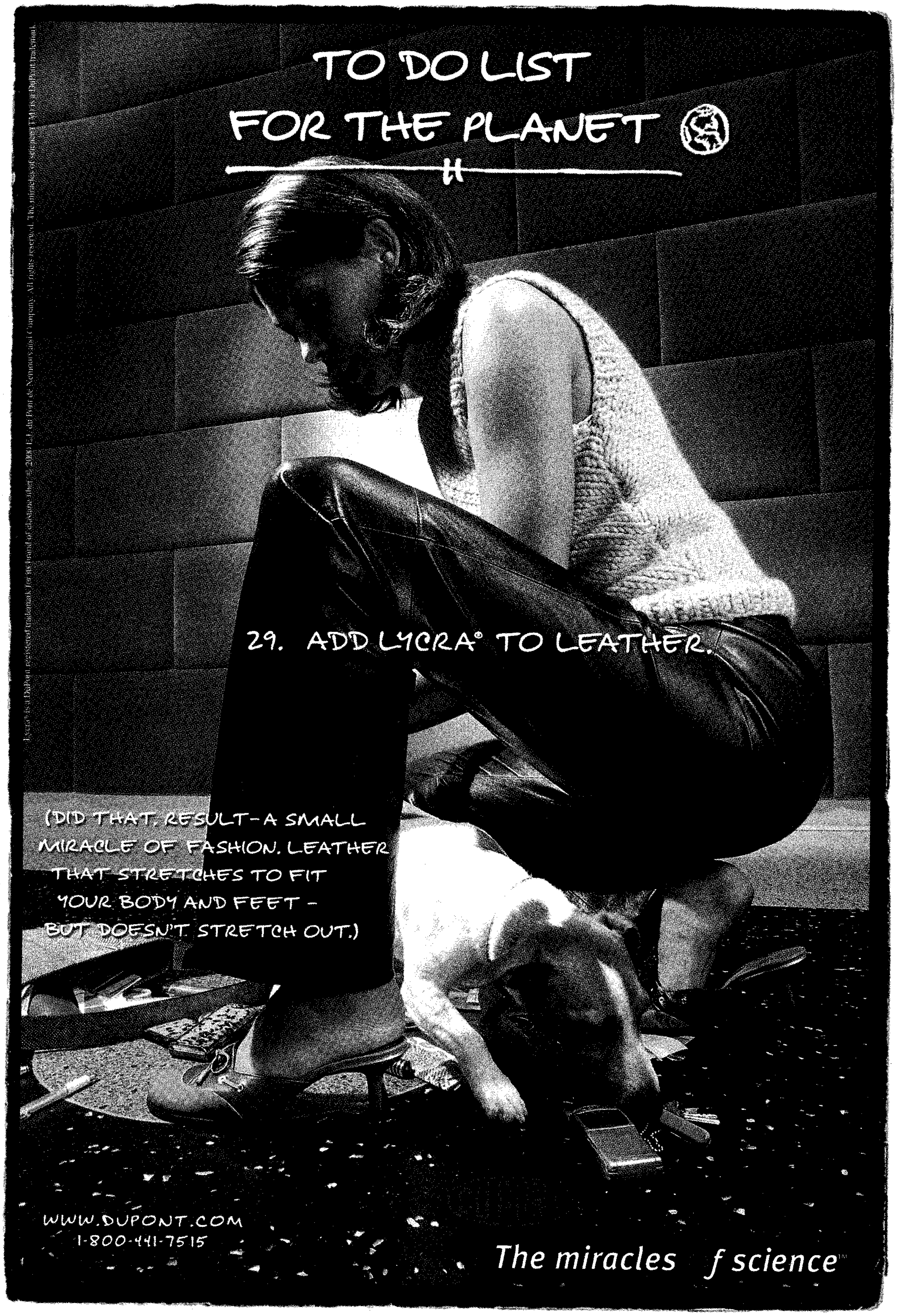
That jump start wouldn't be enough on its own, but there's another, even bigger market for fuel cells on the horizon: demand for reliable electric power, which has skyrocketed, thanks to the Internet and the broadband revolution. The most significant fuel cells, then, are those that will transform the way we generate power. Fuel cells are much cleaner than existing power sources. (Even today, most electricity in the United States is produced from coal.) More important, they promise to provide a reliable, "off the grid" power source, right in your own building. This matters because the U.S. power system is buckling under the demands that are currently being placed upon it. In a perpetually wired economy, even a one-second hiccup in the power supply can wreak havoc on your business. So demand for high-grade, hiccup-free juice is rising at the rate of approximately fifty billion dollars a year. Right now, that demand is being met by gas- and diesel-powered generators, but within a decade quiet, efficient, affordable fuel cells could be lighting up factories and offices from Syracuse to San Jose.

Electricity is the fuel cell's real killer app. But fuel-cell companies will flourish in the electricity market only as a result of the benefits they reap from being in the car market. So, unfashionable as it may sound, government—with its anti-pollution requirements—isn't hindering technological development. It's helping it. This is not unprecedented. The state played a central role in the construction of the railroads and in the creation of the national power grid that fuel cells may help supplant. Not to mention semiconductor technology, the Internet, and Tang.

You don't want the government picking which businesses will succeed and which will fail. But the fuel-cell saga suggests that you can negotiate a path between the extremes of industrial policy on one side and a completely unfettered market on the other. In the long run, the market will determine the fate of fuel cells. But sometimes radical innovations need a nudge. Consider this a little push so that the market can finally pull.

—*James Surowiecki*

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN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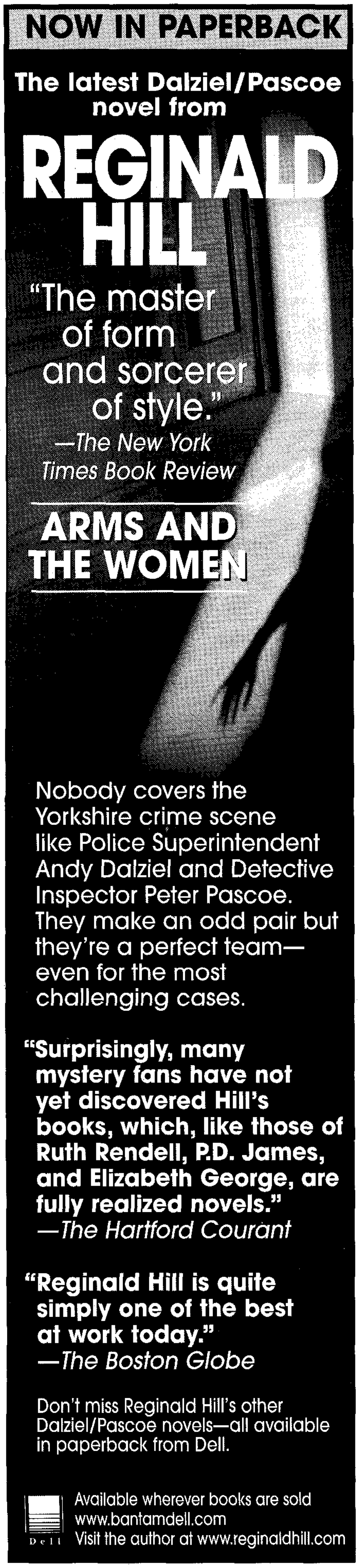

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

SMALLER THAN LIFE

Where Bush and Gore went wrong.

BY JOE KLEIN

On a Sunday afternoon in late October, as scattered, enormous clouds leaked a few unlikely raindrops over Albuquerque, Al Gore stood in the plaza of the new National Hispanic Cultural Center and flirted with the possibility of spontaneity. "This is a nonpolitical occasion," he began, referring to the center's official opening—but that was a ridiculous thing to say in the midst of a Presidential campaign, and the crowd laughed. Gore wisely decided to succumb to their levity, and took a poll on which type of chili they preferred. Then he essayed some extremely broken Spanish: "*Todavía no han vista nada!*" ("You ain't seen nothing yet!") and "*No estoy satisfecho!*" ("I'm not satisfied!") The crowd roared at both, and Gore paused, searching for more Spanish phrases. Finally, he flung his arms out and shouted, "*Arriba!*" This was followed by a Vice-Presidential cackle and a halfhearted addendum: "*Claro que sí!*"

With each phrase, Gore appeared to grow looser and more ironic. For a moment, it seemed possible that he might go further, might try to find some playful way to vent his frustration with the absurdity of the electoral process in which he has become entangled. (There is, after all, a wicked, impolitic sense of humor beneath the Vice-President's suffocating sense of duty.) The crowd, which had sensed the speaker's outlaw glimmerings, seemed ready to be taken somewhere interesting. But, no; he restrained himself. His tone changed, became less puckish; he elegized diversity with a shopworn weariness—"We reach out to embrace the highest common denominator of the American spirit!"—and the crowd drifted from his grasp.

Politicians rarely take the risk of being interesting in October, particularly those who still have a chance to win. Even Bill Clinton chugged ahead mechanically in 1992, staying "on message," keeping a distance from the press, counting down the days. But Al Gore faces a maddening dilemma: The election seemed his in mid-September; the polls not only had him ahead—a solid, seemingly impregnable nine points ahead, according to surveys done by his staff—but also showed that the public agreed with him on the most important issues. His opponent, George W. Bush, appeared inept and overmatched. And yet, even before the debates began, the Vice-President's appeal was waning. It is difficult to say precisely why. The debates went badly, but there wasn't a decisive moment; the slide has been subtle and mysterious. The race remains close, and the Vice-President could easily win, but the election is likely to be decided on the sorts of factors that often elude pollsters, especially in races where the turnout is low—the intensity of support, the ability of local political organizations to mobilize their people, an outside event (the market goes up or down, the Middle East gets worse or better), the weather.

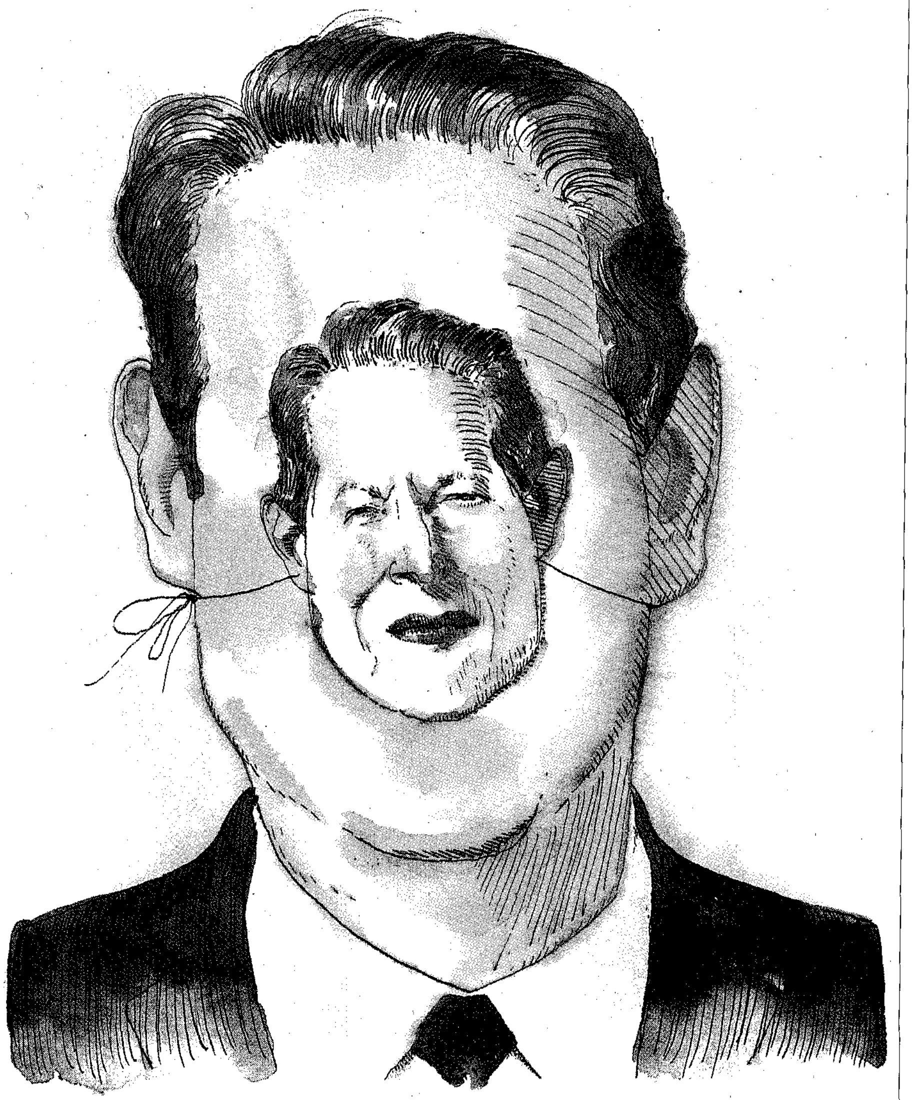
Still, the wasting of Gore has been a stunning, and quite unexpected, phenomenon. The fall campaign should have been the moment when Bush's mettle was tested, his personality and intellect dissected. After all, he was the relative newcomer, unknown to most Americans. There are still serious questions about how well suited he is for the Presidency. Bush's shortcomings, however, have seemed almost peripheral for the past month. Al Gore's personality—his sighs, his alleged exaggerations, his shifting demeanors, his pomposity and condescension—has become the central issue in this race. This may not be fair; Gore's obvious strengths—his experience, his moderation, and even his intelligence—have been lost in the process. But the September emphasis on Bush's assorted gaffes and sentence mangling wasn't entirely fair, either. And Gore has earned the scrutiny with grating, uncomfortable debate performances that dismayed even the most devoted Demo-

BARRY BLITT

crats (including the President, if the published rumors are correct). "Al Gore is divided into three parts," a prominent Democrat told me. "Intellectually, he's a New Democrat. Emotionally, he's his father's son—a Southern populist. And, practically, he's a Washington insider—he tends to focus on means, not ends; he addresses interest groups, not issues. This is a real problem, because in Presidential politics the whole has to be larger than the sum of its parts. With Al in this campaign, we've seen details, proposals, and all three of his various 'parts,' but we've never seen a whole, Presidential human being."

Of course, George W. Bush hasn't quite seemed a whole, Presidential human being, either. A whispered comment Bush made to me after he appeared on the lawn at the family manse in Kennebunkport, Maine, with his father in June of 1999 has lingered: "I was afraid you guys would look at him and look at me and say, 'There's the President and Mini-Me.' " He was joking, of course—his self-effacing humor is one of his more endearing qualities—but the truth is that George W. Bush does look an awful lot like his father, only smaller.

He is better on the stump now, delivering his lines with a confidence that sometimes eludes Gore—but they still sound like lines, rather than convictions. In New Hampshire, several days after the third debate, Bush appeared at St. Anselm College in a town-meeting format. He stood, shoulders hunched, in front of a microphone, his arms separated slightly, as if he were about to lift something or wrestle someone. A student from Dartmouth asked why his fellow-students who were "open-minded Democrats" should vote for him. "You tell them you've got a leader on your hands," he said. "You tell them it doesn't



Al Gore, Jr. Politicians rarely take the risk of being interesting in October.

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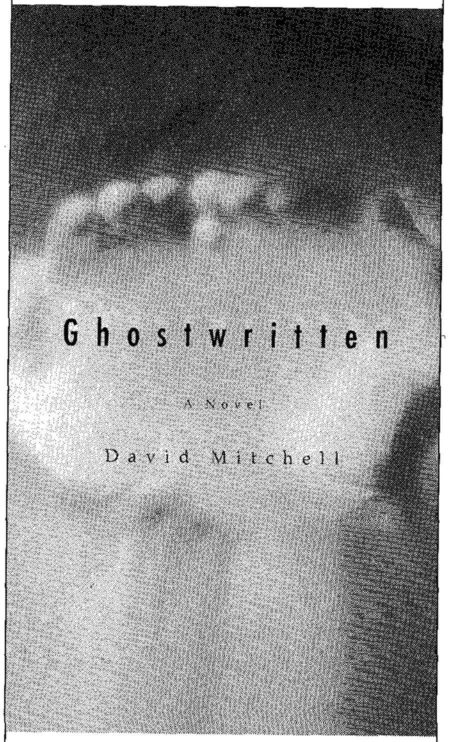

RANDOM HOUSE
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have to be that way in Washington."

He went on like that, to little effect, tossing out campaign slogans; he said he was a compassionate conservative; he said the greatness of America didn't emanate from some congressional committee but from the goodness of the American people. At St. Anselm, as in the debates, he did little to allay the suspicion that his substantive knowledge, even of his own positions, goes no deeper than the debate-prep briefing-book level.

When I read the transcripts of the debates a week after the last one had taken place and my specific memories of the candidates' performances had started to fade, Bush's lack of knowledge was all too apparent—but there were other qualities that were more surprising: a casual demagoguery (especially about the evils of Washington, D.C.), and a willful inaccuracy that at times beggared Gore's self-destructive, though relatively paltry, exaggerations. Early in the first debate, for example, there was an endless, but instructive, exchange on prescription drugs for the elderly. Bush's position on the issue is arguably more responsible than Gore's. He would provide immediate relief for the poorest of the elderly—those few who actually are forced to choose between medicine and food—and then try to implement a long-term, market-oriented reform that would give the elderly a choice of several plans, including some with prescription-drug benefits (a solution that was proposed by the bipartisan Breaux-Frist commission, and is favored by many moderate Democrats). Gore, by contrast, has opposed reform and favors a new, wildly expensive prescription-drug entitlement for all Medicare recipients. Worse, Gore frames the Medicare debate in a way that plays on the fears of the elderly, when the real question is the enormous price younger Americans will have to pay when the baby-boom generation retires.

But Bush didn't seem to know enough about his plan to defend it responsibly. Gore produced an elderly couple in the audience—the inevitable elderly couple—who would be ineligible for Bush's prescription-drug plan. The Governor responded with demagoguery, and a lie:

> BUSH: I cannot let this go by, the old-style Washington politics. . . . Under my plan the man gets immediate help with prescription drugs. . . .
>
> GORE: They get $25,000 income. That makes them ineligible.
>
> BUSH: Look, this is a man who has great numbers. He talks about numbers. I'm beginning to think not only did he invent the Internet, but he invented the calculator. It's fuzzy math.

This was the first of many such moments, although Bush usually wasn't so coarse—the "calculator" line was the last canned zinger of the debates. The famous "fuzzy math" allegation was wrong, however; Gore was right about the numbers. But Bush paid no price for his inaccuracy, and he proceeded to be creatively wrong on a number of other issues, including his leadership in the passage of the patients' bill of rights in Texas (his role was more like passive resistance) and the amount of money his state spends on those who don't have health insurance. (He said $4.7 billion, but $3.5 billion of that comes from charity.) He was willfully misleading on other issues, like European participation in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. (He implied that there wasn't any, even though Europeans make up more than eighty per cent of the peacekeepers.)

Soon, every time Gore made an effective argument Bush dismissed it as mumbo-jumbo from the nation's capital. (Or he claimed that Gore had indulged in an old debater's trick—which is itself an old debater's trick.) And Gore seemed helpless to respond. When Bush insisted that "nothing" had happened in Washington during the past eight years on an assortment of issues, Gore didn't even suggest that Newt Gingrich and a rather extreme band of congressional Republicans had played a role in the "bickering" and "finger-pointing" that Bush was criticizing. The omission was deliberate. "It was believed that people wouldn't respond to that," a Gore aide said. "The re-

---

5¢ A PEEK

The day my class was to go to the circus,
I went into the bathroom, early,
and stood on tiptoe, into the bottom
corner of the mirror, and leaned on the sink,
and slowly cut off my eyelashes
down close to the eyelid. I had no idea what I was
doing, or why, I studied the effect
—not bad, a little stark, but when I saw the effect
on my mother, not just anger, but pity
and horror, I was interested.
I think I had almost given up on being
a girl, on trying to grow up to be a woman like my mother,
I wanted to get disadopted
and go home to the baby with the calf's head,
home to that birth mother the bearded lady,
that father the sword swallower stopped mid-swallow,
one with the sword. I had tried to act normal
but when the inspiration came
I felt I was meant to act on it,
to look at my mom with my gaze trimmed to a seer's
and see her see me for an instant, see her
irises contract. I did not
imagine I could ever leave my mother,
mostly I *was* her, in distorted form,
but at least for that second the itsy scissors
spoke to her with their birdy beak,
skreeek, *skreeek*, witch whinge. And when
my lashes grew back, no thicker no thinner no
shorter no longer, my mother sat me
down and taught me to bat them, to look
sidelong, blindly, and shudder them at seven beats a second.

—*Sharon Olds*

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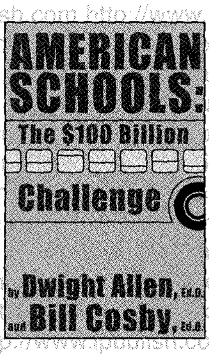
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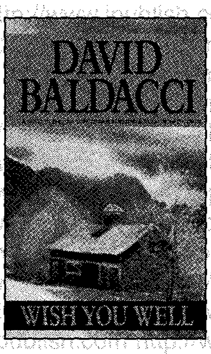
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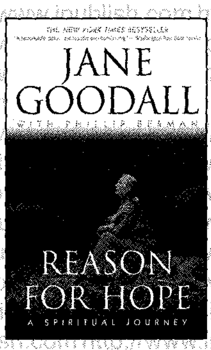
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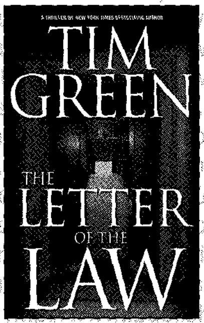
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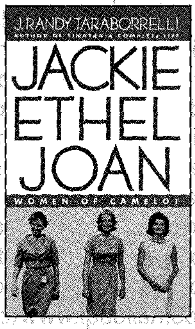
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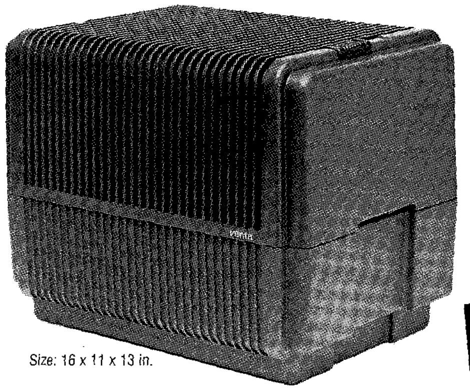

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search showed they wanted the election to be about the future, not the past."

It is accepted wisdom that Gore was too "aggressive" in the debates, and he was, undeniably, obnoxious at times. But I suspect that the real problem was quite the opposite, and a chronic one for Gore—that he was too passive, too constricted, too malleable, too willing to trim his persona to match "the research." As a result, almost everything he said seemed calculated, and the calculations were often so transparent as to be embarrassing. Gore's unwillingness to defend the record of the past eight years was a calculation. ("Stay away from Clinton!" the research said.) His unwillingness to confront Bush on gun control was also a calculation. (Too many gun lovers in Pennsylvania and Michigan!) He did not even ask why Bush had signed a law that made it legal to carry a concealed gun to church. Gore did not take a single position that was politically inconvenient or in any way courageous in any of the debates, and he has taken precious few such positions in the campaign (only free trade comes to mind).

One wonders what happened to the Vice-President's vaunted debating skills; even his closest advisers seem at a loss to explain it—perhaps because he followed their advice so closely. Gore's most credible defenders often point out that he has been an excellent Vice-President—solid, smart, decisive in the private deliberations of the Clinton Administration—and that these are the traits he will bring to the Presidency. But the Presidency is a far more public position than the Vice-Presidency, and Gore has a distressing tendency to go goofy in the spotlight. His painfully transparent personality change between the first and second debates, from lion to lamb, raised a fundamental question of character: how could we trust a man who reinvented himself so readily? It was probably far more damaging than any of the dramatic sighs or interruptions in the first debate. A particularly telling moment came midway through the second debate, when the discussion turned to the murders at Columbine High School, in Colorado:

BUSH: Let me say something about Columbine. Listen, we've got gun laws. He says we ought to have gun-free schools. Everybody believes that. . . . But there seems to be a lot of preoccupation on—not certainly only in this debate, but just in general—on law. But there's a larger law. Love your neighbor like you would like to be loved yourself.

GORE: I also believe in the Golden Rule. And I agree with a lot of the other things the Governor has said.

Gore had given one of the more passionate speeches of his life at the memorial service for the murdered Columbine students. For more than a year, he had attended town meetings across the country where Columbine had been a topic of great concern, often the very first issue raised. He eventually did, after a spew of caveats, address the gun question in the debate. But he had been effectively stymied by a handful of gun-loving swing voters—unable to effectively communicate with the overwhelming majority of Americans who support his tougher position on gun laws, and who oppose Bush's obeisance to the gun lobby.

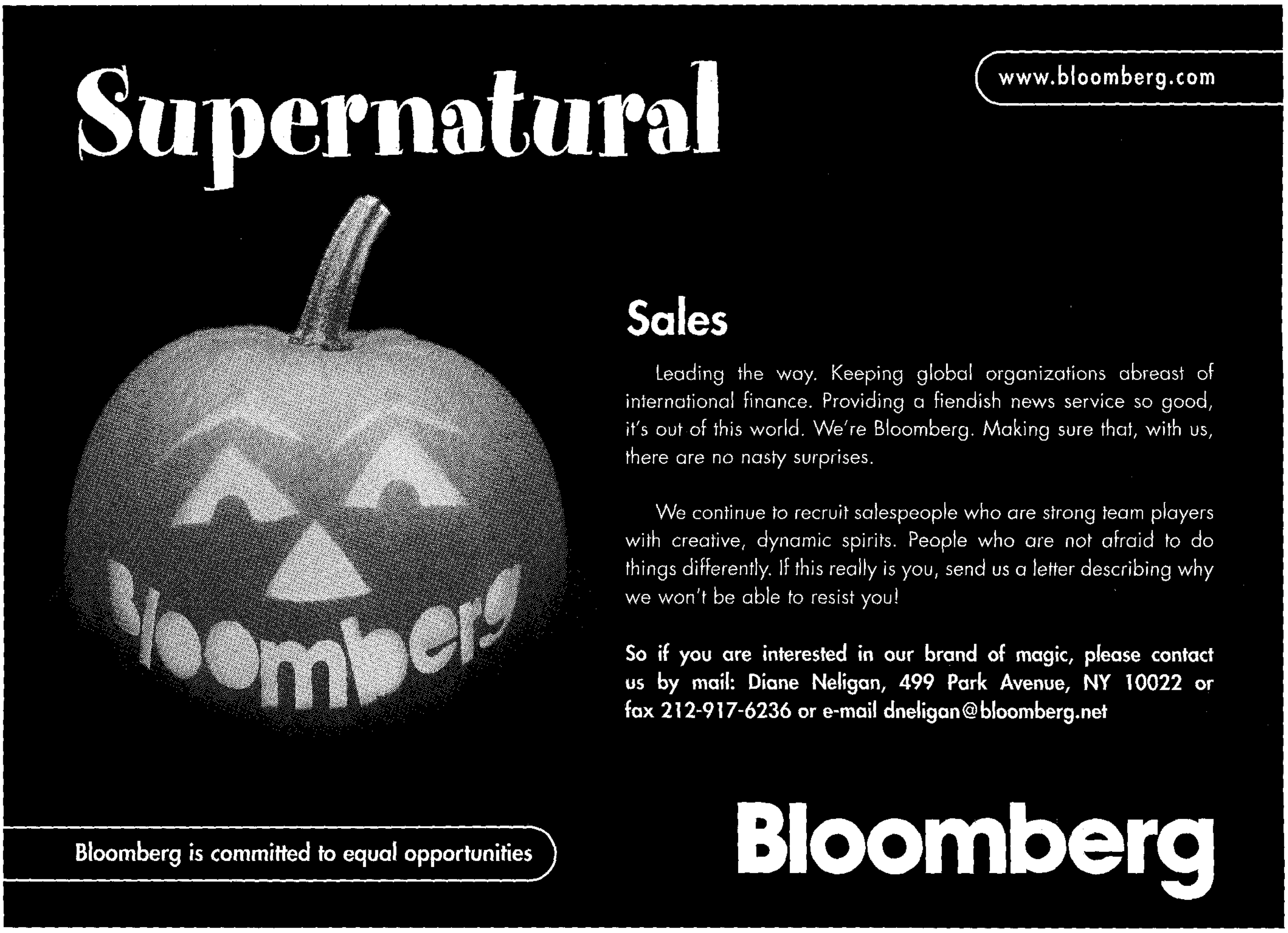
Two days after the last debate, Bush and Gore shared a podium at the Al Smith dinner, which is sponsored by New York's Catholic Archdiocese. The dress at the Smith dinner is white tie and tails, and the remarks offered by politicians are equally formal, following a pattern that is as tightly structured as a sonnet. One must be brief and humorous, in a self-deprecating way; a few serious paragraphs, usually on the subject of religious tolerance, should be included toward the end, followed by a joke.

Both Bush and Gore were extremely funny that night. But there was a marked difference between the two in the "serious" section. Gore's remarks were tossed off and unmemorable—they had to do with Al Smith, the first Catholic to run for President, and the need for tolerance. Bush was far more compelling. He offered a lovely eulogy (written by his top speechwriter, Mike Gerson, presumably) to the recently deceased Cardinal John O'Connor. But before that Bush turned to Gore and said, "My opponent and I have had some strong differences, but let me tell you a few things I've learned in this campaign. He's a man who clearly respects and loves his wife and family. Like me, he married up. I've also learned he's a person of energy and skill and determination. This year, Mr. Vice-President, I can't wish you success, but I do wish you well."

The graciousness was not reciprocated. But then with Gore it rarely is. This has been a striking aspect of the campaign. Bush, from time to time, has broken through the rote drudgery of the political grind to reveal an unrehearsed personal decency. At a town meeting in Hilton Head, South Carolina, last February, in the midst of the ugly campaign he was waging against John McCain, Bush was asked by a sneering man what he would do about "all these bastards" being born to women on welfare.

This is a question that many politicians, and particularly Republicans, have used to demonstrate their toughness over the years. But Bush glared at the man—he seemed truly angry—and said, "First, sir, we must remember that it is our duty to love all the children."

I have not seen Gore do anything like that this year. Indeed, he tends to turn ev-



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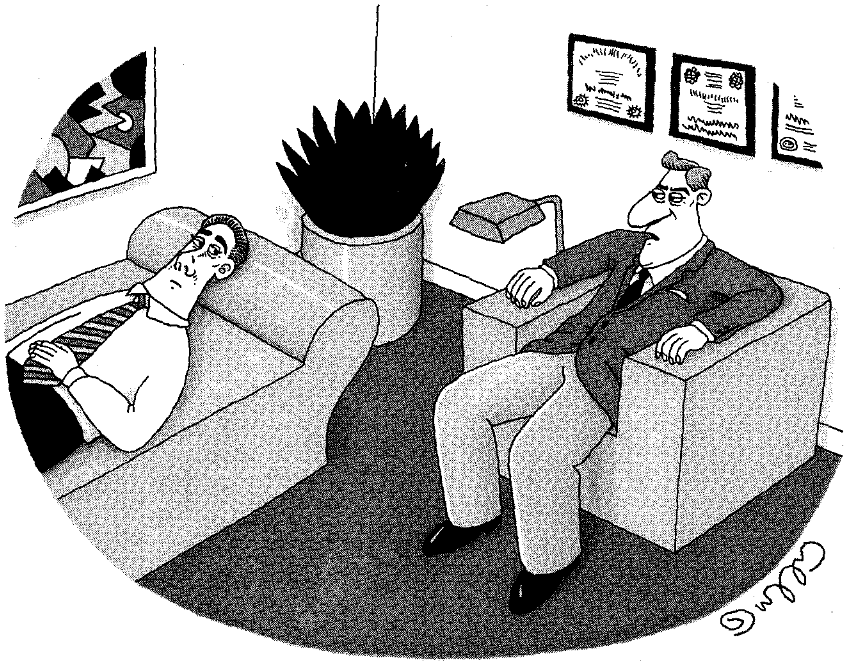
ery moment into a political calculation. At the beginning of the third debate, when he eulogized Governor Mel Carnahan, of Missouri, who had been killed in a plane crash the night before, he could not resist saying, "This state became one of the top five in the nation for health-care coverage for children under his leadership"—a reference, of course, to Bush's terrible health-insurance record in Texas.

There is a sad, graceless desperation to Al Gore, a quality that has slowly, almost subliminally been communicated to the electorate in the course of the campaign—and this is the real reason, I suspect, that he has suffered in the polls. The populist rhetoric that has marked his campaign—"I will fight for the people, not the powerful"—may contribute as well. Unlike Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996, Gore has been forced to mobilize the left wing of the Democratic Party in order to blunt Ralph Nader's Green Party candidacy, which may affect the election in a number of closely contested states. He has also been forced to project an angrier, more divisive image, in order to court those who believe he really isn't much different from Bush. Last week, he campaigned in Oregon with John Sweeney, of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. (Clinton rarely associated himself so closely with big labor during a campaign), while delivering a fervent environmental pitch—a slightly awkward juxtaposition, given labor's ambivalence about pollution controls.

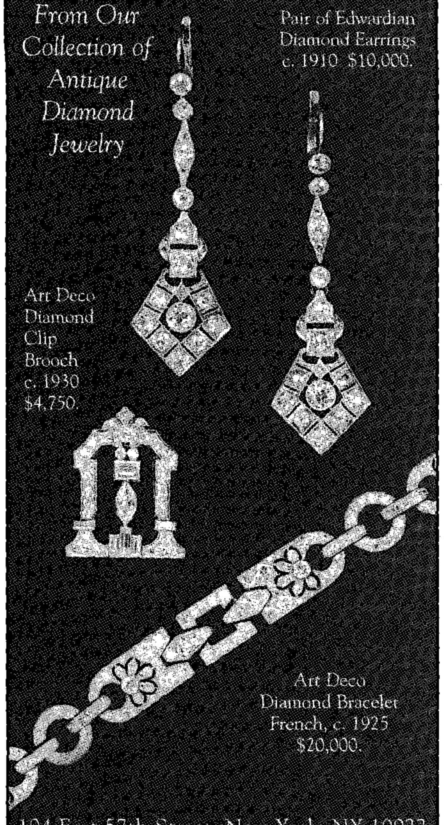
Gore's aides argue that his Convention speech, which launched his most successful period in the campaign, succeeded because it made the populist case so effectively. But one wonders if his selection of Joe Lieberman as Vice-President—and the big-hearted inclusiveness it seemed to indicate—had as much to do with Gore's brief September surge.

Greatness of spirit is not a prerequisite to winning the Presidency. Richard Nixon did not have it; Ronald Reagan's was scripted; Bill Clinton's was undermined by his self-indulgence. But it is a subtly important quality, especially in an era when the Presidency has become so intimate an office, so much a part of the daily life of the nation. And it has been missing entirely in this general-election campaign. Neither candidate has set any great national goals that don't involve giveaways of one sort or another. Neither has challenged the American people in any way. Neither has attempted to inspire us. (Gore's only request is to ask his audiences not to be cynical about the things he is saying: "I ask you to open your hearts and genuinely believe without reservation that we can do the right thing in America.")

There is a reason for this. "People are not interested in it," Frank Luntz, the Republican pollster, said. "There is no desire for a call to action. People are focussed on their own lives, their own neighborhoods. They lived through great political crusades—in 1992 and



"Don't make me come over there!"



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1994—and both proved to be very disappointing. After Clinton and Gingrich, there is charisma fatigue."

At the end of the seventh Presidential campaign that I have covered, I find myself suffering from a different sort of fatigue—consultant fatigue. Luntz is no doubt right, given the results he culls from his focus groups: the idea of charisma, of sacrifice, of larger national purpose probably does seem tiresome to the civilians who are looking for nothing more than smaller class sizes and prescription-drug benefits. Experts like Luntz make a compelling case to politicians like Gore and Bush about the sorts of language they should use and the issues they should emphasize—but the result always seems cramped and uninteresting, smaller than life: Bush and Gore debating Columbine without passion.

And the consultants' advice is nonsense. True leadership is not something that can be tested in advance by a handful of cookie-munching focus-group members. It happens in the moment—in the arena, as Theodore Roosevelt said—and it often requires asking people to grow, change, make a sacrifice of some sort. The possibility of such leadership flickered for a moment last winter, when John McCain strutted his inspiring personal story and unshackled candor across New Hampshire (and then waned when McCain became besotted with his own righteousness). It worked for Bill Clinton in 1992, particularly when he talked about national service—an idea that has proved somewhat disappointing and peripheral as implemented, but which raised the possibility of a higher calling for young people, a larger national purpose. It was his best applause line—and there was a reason for that. People might not say so in focus groups, but they are looking for leaders who know more than they do, who will inspire them, who will tell them what comes next, who will convince them that they must be part of something larger than themselves.

There have been no such applause lines for Bush or Gore this year. Each man has chosen to run a narrow, tactical campaign, a campaign of tax cuts and pandering to the elderly—a campaign far too small for so grand a country. It is difficult to say how "large" George W. Bush is or could be, but it seems painfully clear that Al Gore has shrunk himself to fit the race. ♦

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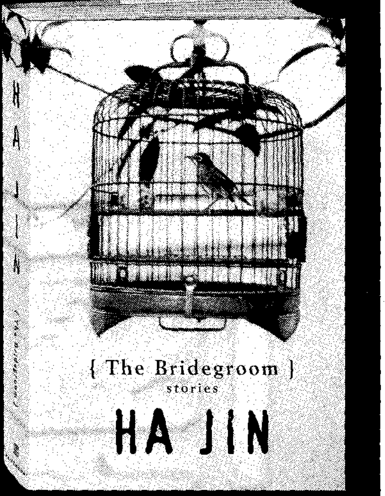

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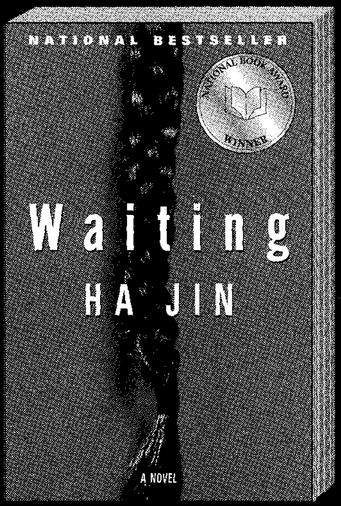

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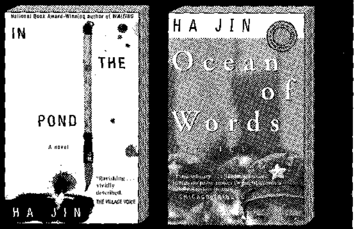

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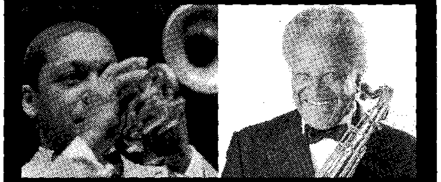

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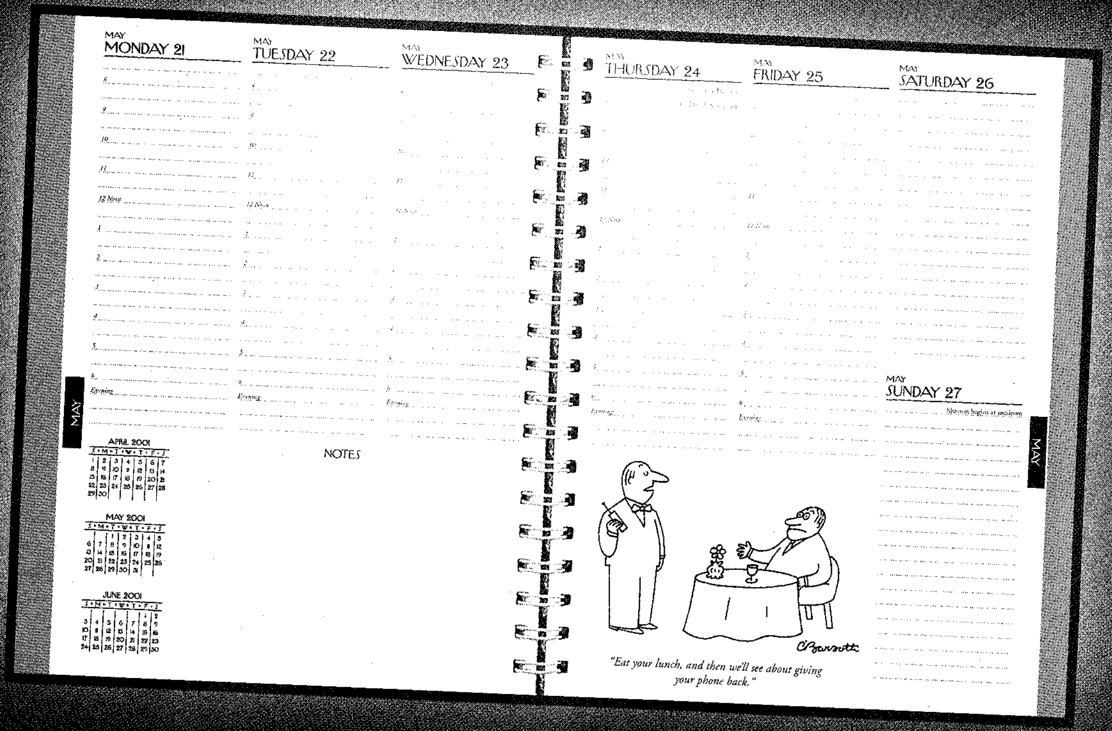
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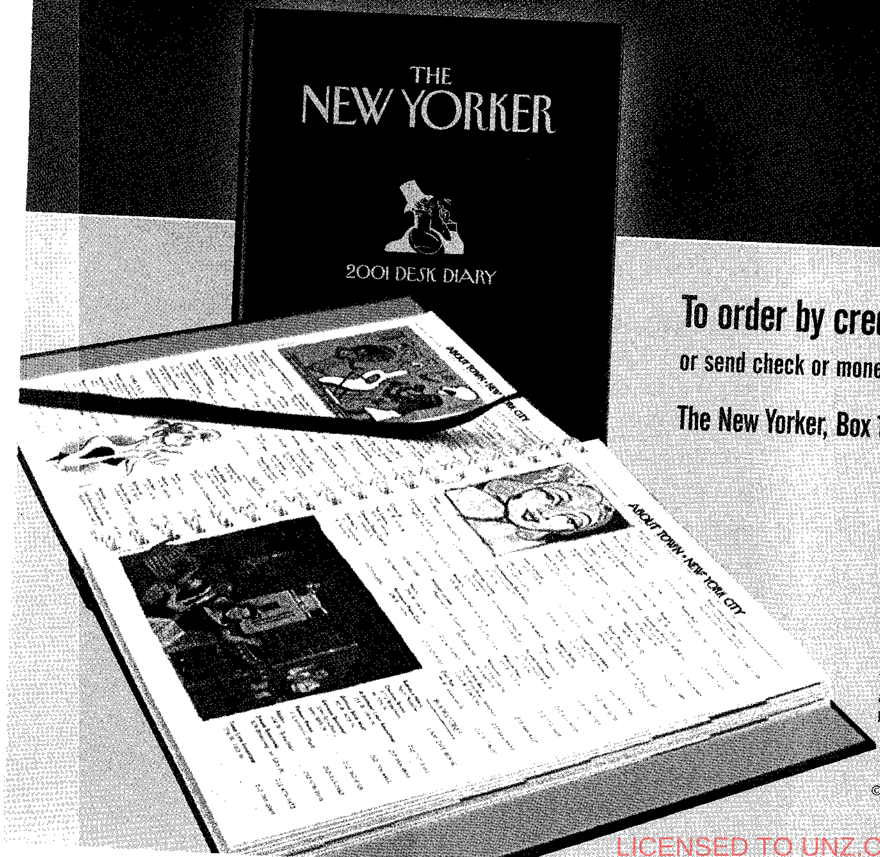
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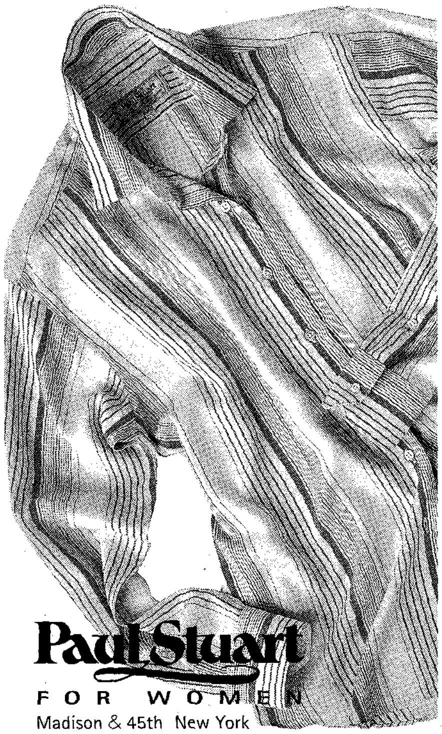

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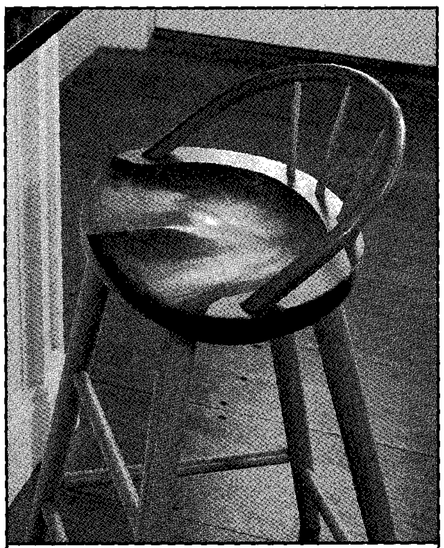

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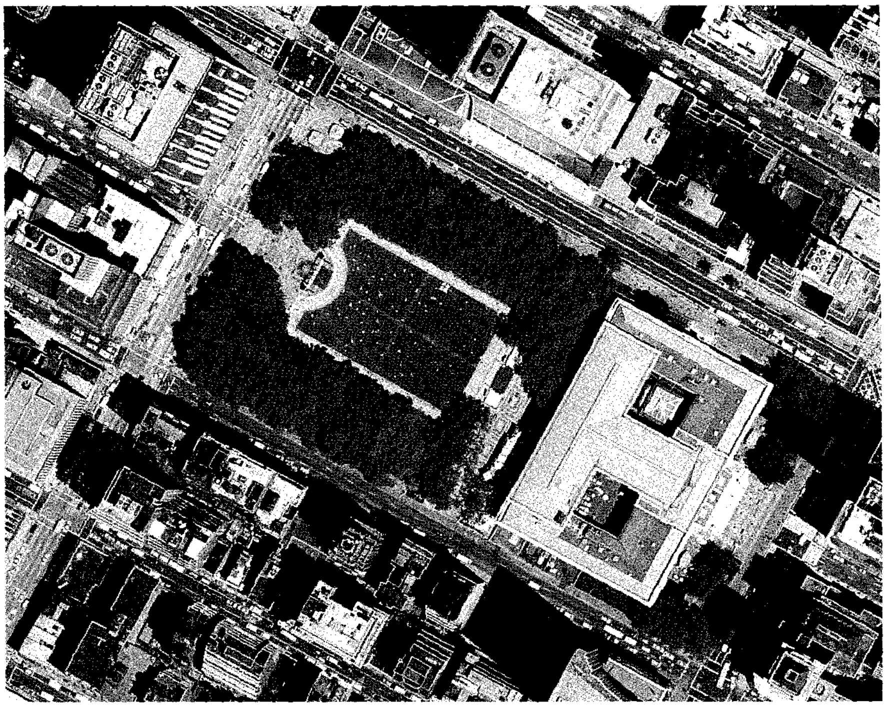
NEW YORK JOURNAL

STREET FURNITURE

The most complete map of the city and everything in it.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

On a gray Thursday morning a couple of weeks ago, in a big faceless building near City Hall, an "élite" group of city-government people got together to look at what the Map has already captured, and to tell the mapmakers what they dreamed of capturing next. People like to say that New York is a city of interesting and obscure subcultures, and one of the most interesting and obscure of these is the City of New York. The people who run the city (as opposed to the politicians and the police, who mostly react to it) often spend more money and touch more lives than the people the newspapers like to write about, but they are mostly invisible to the rest of us. (The Department of Environmental Protection, for instance, spends about a *billion* dollars every year, but you do not know the name of Joel A. Miele, the man who is in charge of spending it.) New York City government people tend to regard themselves as citizens of a kind of mirror-image Hong Kong: a successful socialist city-state plumped down in the midst of an ocean of dogmatic free-marketeers. They know that everybody in the big country outside looks at them suspiciously. They have evolved a defensive, careful formal language of their own, which other New Yorkers only occasionally overhear, in subway announcements of the supervisors-are-currently-investigating-the-delay-we-hope-the-trains-will-be-moving-shortly variety. They also have a more informal language—someone will say of a project, "It's stuck on Stanley's desk," to instant nods of understanding, as though someone at a DreamWorks meeting had said, "Steven's reading it this weekend"—and even a decorating style, which is partly Moscow-on-the-Hudson, partly good-government civics textbook from the sixties. Where everyone else in New York offices does small things in stylish ways, they do very big things with no style at



The orthographic depiction of Bryant Park and the Forty-second Street library.

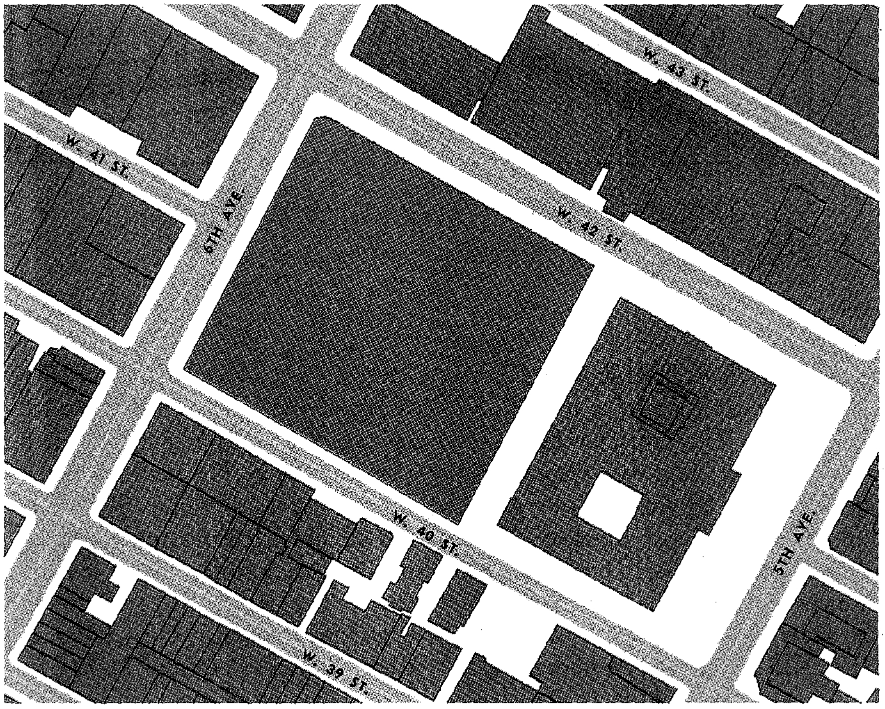
all. The other morning, for instance, bits and pieces of the Map had been put up on a white wall with masking tape that seemed to date from the Wagner administration. As Alan Leidner, who is the head of geographic-information systems for the city, and the father of the Map, spoke about what the Map could do, the Map itself kept falling down behind him, like the baggy pants of a burlesque comedian.

Leidner has the look of a city man. He wears white shirts, thin ties, and an air of steady, ingenuous sincerity—like a high-school teacher of the fifties, concerned about juvenile delinquency, but sure there are no bad kids. "Well, the wonderful news," he announced to the group, "is that LION and GOGIS are close to being fully registered to the base map, and"—he held up a sheaf of six CDs in jackets—"*here* it is, in two versions, seamless, and borough by borough. Within a week, the Map will be ready. But don't ask me how we distribute it."

What is the Map? The Map has not yet got a lot of P.R., partly because it is a colossal event only in the geographic-information-systems world, and *GEOWorld,* the *Women's Wear Daily* of G.I.S., typically runs articles with headlines like "Geospatial Events Promote Federal Initiatives" and "Saskatchewan Implements New Land Title System." Nonetheless, the Map is a big deal. Its official name is NYCMap (pronounced "nice map"), and it is the first integrated, one-inch-to-a-hundred-feet, perfectly accurate map that has ever been made of the entire City of New York and everything in it. It was finished about three months ago and has been called "probably the most complicated and detailed urban map ever created," the most nearly complete picture of a city that has ever been made. It shows—not just as imagery but as defined, color-coded, click-on-this-encyclopedia-entry items—more than a million and a half distinct features, including every building, street, tank, bridge, tower, antenna, courtyard, runway, curb line, railway fence, elevation, ventilation grate, cemetery boundary, river, lake, pond, stream, swamp, beach, shoreline, pier, pavement center line, alley (1,976), and ocean (one) in the entire City of New York. It will soon show every tax lot, sewer main, subway entrance, and power line in the city, not to mention the paths in the parks. By the time it is revised, next spring, it will show all the "street furniture" of the city, giving a place name to every parking meter, fire hydrant, manhole, and telephone booth. It even has its little quirks. It has no category for statues, and Liberty exists, alone, as a hidden allusion. She is merely called a "monument."

COURTESY OF CITY OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

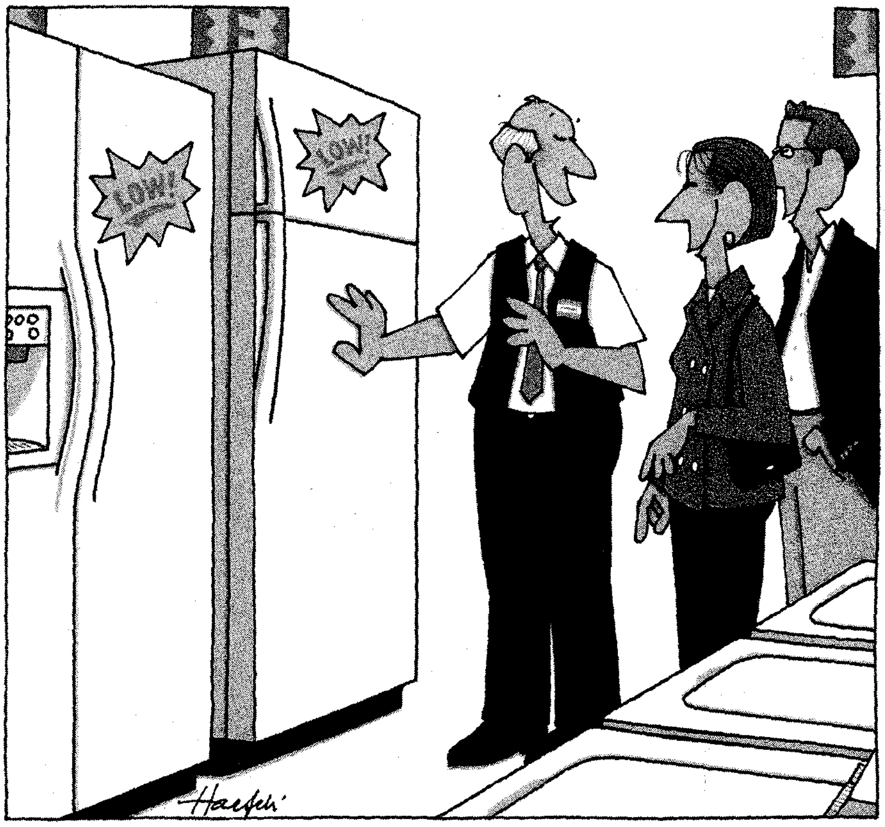
One of the difficult things about the Map is that it is really many maps, a layer cake of plans, each laid accurately on top of the one before. There are so many new elements being mapped onto it every day that there are city people who seem to believe that in a couple of years it may be cheaper and more comfortable to forget about the city and just move into the map. When people ask Alan Leidner how big it will be, for instance, he finds it hard to answer, since it exists in as many forms as you have questions to ask it. And because it has so many versions, it's very hard to describe. When people ask if you could put it in your glove compartment, the answer is that you could, if you drive a very big car. But the real value of the Map is that every version of it—the one that shows sewer mains, say, and the one that shows tax lots—will be drawn to the same scale and will point in the same direction, so that you could lay down any version of the Map on top of any other version of the Map and say, Oh, this is the same place.



The same area in the stylized, planometric version of the map.

Of all these versions, or layers, though, the two "base" layers are the orthographic map and the planometric map. The orthographic map is basically a very big, amazingly well-focussed overhead snapshot of New York, broken down into seven-block units called "tiles." There are 1,870 tiles. Its dominant colors are asphalt-black, tree-green, and rooftop-beige, with the reds and blues of undocumented cars sprinkled over it like confetti. The planometric map is a stylized map that outlines all the features in the photographs and gives everything a name. You can adjust the colors to taste, but the dominant color of the map that day was red—since red stood for buildings—except in Queens, which was mostly green. (White stood for nothing worth noting. There was more white on the map than you might expect, especially on the West Side.)

A project as vast as the Map ought to have begun as a sketch on a napkin. The Map began as a sketch on a napkin. A decade ago, Alan Leidner was having lunch with Richard Steinberg, of the Department of City Planning, at Spaghetti Western, a restaurant on Reade Street popular among city people. At the time, there were a lot of maps but


LOW!
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"Now, this baby can hold up to five hundred magnets."

no one map. "We talked about the difficulties of the situation as it existed," Leidner says. "If you had a water-main break, say, you had five responding agencies, each arriving with its maps, and a Keystone Kops comedy of 'Mine is here, where's yours?' There were lots of maps of the city, but basically none of the maps had anything to do with each other." On a Spaghetti Western napkin, Leidner sketched out the idea of a base map to which all other maps could be oriented—"a pastrami sandwich with Velcro tags."

"Step by step, we went through the city to win approval," he says today, shaking his head at the thought, like a man who has ascended Everest not only without oxygen but without a sweater. It took about five years and two administrations until the actual mapping started, in the spring of 1996. The Map began with a big overhead snapshot. Taking a big overhead snapshot of New York, as it turns out, is not so easy. If you take overhead pictures of the city in summer, you cannot see the features on the street because the leaves cover them. If you take pictures in "leaf-off" time, the sun will be at an oblique angle, casting long, occluding shadows on tall buildings and on the pavement below. The mappers had to make two series of flights. One was in "leaf-off" time, in early spring. The second filled an entire day around the summer solstice, June 21, 1996. (If you were out walking your dog that day, you might be on the map.) They took 1,672 overhead individual photographs, each of about a ten-square-block area, and the photographs were scanned into a computer at a resolution of about one foot. (This means that if something is a foot large or longer on the ground, you can see it clearly in the photograph.)

Then everyone got into an argument about what features to "capture" on the second layer, the planometric map. Alleys and airshafts were included, at long last, but water towers and fire escapes were left out. Awnings were the subject of an intense debate. "Awnings! What do you *do* with them?" Leidner says, achingly. "And then driveways! When you capture them, what do you do with them?" The map men finally decided to itemize concrete awnings—movie marquees, for instance—and not fabric awnings. (They omitted some other important features. At that Thursday-morning meeting, the Department of Finance complained that the mappers had forgotten all about the billboards. Since billboards pay taxes, the Department of Finance would like to know exactly where they all are. When the revision is completed, it probably will.)

Once the city men had decided which items on the photographs they wanted captured, they sent the photographs and the list of features to a company called Analytical Surveys, Inc., in Colorado Springs, where seven people, working with styluses on computer screens, drew outlines around the features in the photographs—each Rocky Mountain analyst staring through a stereo viewer for a year at a little quadrant of Brooklyn, trying to distinguish a driveway from a walkway. (The Map was cheap. It cost around three million dollars—or something less than Carolyn Roehm has spent to redo one centimetre of it. This is because computer mapping is an eager new industry, and all the people in it knew that whoever worked on the map of New York would be able to put on airs, and up prices, when the people from Akron came, asking for *their* map.)

"The trouble was, once we had the planometrics from Colorado, how do you do quality control?" Alan Leidner says. "The map is worthless if it's not drawn right, but how do you know if two million features have been drawn right? Fortunately, we were able to bring in Sean Ahearn's team at Hunter and people like Bob Sklar."

Bob Sklar was born fifty years ago in East Flatbush. He has always been interested in maps of New York—when he was eleven, he wrote to the city with a query so detailed that he was offered a job in the map department. (His mother still has a copy of the letter.) It became his job to compare the planometric tiles to the photographic tiles. He became the fact checker of New York. "I used my particular knowledge of the city to clarify roads that run under roads," he says. "The roads under the Major Deegan Expressway around 149th Street in the Bronx, for instance. I was very pleased to be able to untangle that from memory.

I was also able to use my firsthand knowledge unravelling the interchanges of the George Washington Bridge. That was probably the hardest thing on the Map. There are two complete levels, each of which has feeder roads, and the interchanges are all duplicated there. That was like untying a knot."

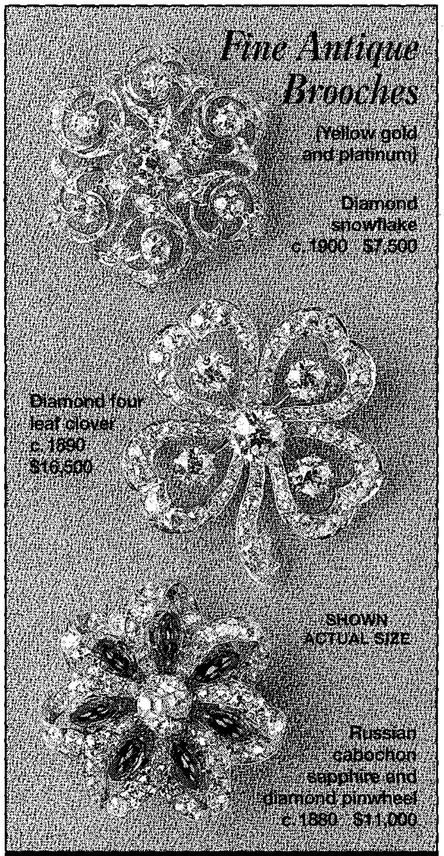
When Bob Sklar didn't remember how the roads and buildings really ran, he got on the subway with a piece of the Map and went to look. "There were many places where I went to check the arrangements by myself. I'm very pleased with my work on the buildings at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, for instance. There were also many visible subway tracks that had to be clarified. There's a *very* confusing section of the B-train tracks in Brooklyn, and I spent an enjoyable day clarifying those." His favorite incident in his two years of work involved a piece of the Map that showed a bit of Manhattan and a bit of the Bronx in a single tile, on either side of the Harlem River. "The Colorado coder had left the streets in the Bronx as 'No-Name.' I learned later that he was under the misapprehension that the Bronx was part of New Jersey. After marvelling that someone was allowed to eat and breathe who thought that, I decided that he ought to be introduced to George Steinbrenner, as he is always trying to move the Yankees to New Jersey, and would find it funny to meet someone who thought they were already there." In the end, Bob Sklar made about thirty thousand corrections to the tiles.

Once the Map was ready, its first uses were pretty mundane. The Parks Department used it to help in a lawsuit, for example. It was only with the coming of the latest West Nile virus scare that the Map proved that it mattered. "The basic elements that people had to pay attention to were pretty clear," Mario Merlino, of the Department of Health, explains. "The problem was mosquitoes, which live in shallow, stagnant water, which is often near tire dumps. The Map could show us not just where the tire dumps were, using the imagery, but also, with the topographic elevations, it could show us where the stagnant water was likely to collect. We were able to focus the spraying on the areas that needed it."

The only problem with the Map is that it is too good. The men who made it would like to let it out in the world—put it on the Internet where everyone could use it—but the federal government is not crazy about this idea, since the F.B.I. and the F.A.A. regard the Map, in all its layers, as that often imagined thing a "blueprint for terrorism."

Melancholy map-gazers will no doubt detect other hazards, once they get a chance to see it. The one sure thing about maps, after all, is that in retrospect they look more like the time that made them than like the thing they were meant to show. We chart our cities, and we chart ourselves. Maps of New York from the early nineteenth century, which you can see right now in the "Art and the Empire City" exhibition at the Met, have a comic, George M. Cohan feistiness to them: New York was really such a teensy-weensy provincial town then, still wet behind the ears and on the edges, and yet its cartographers drew its little steeples, its Cherry Tree Lane of a Broadway with majestic pride. The Panorama of the City of New York from the 1964 World's Fair, which sits lonesome in the Queens Museum of Art—and until now was the most ambitious attempt to get it all down right—today looks less like New York than like the mind of Robert Moses, the Ozymandias of the approaches to the Triborough Bridge. (The skyscrapers are made of wood and plastic, and don't look the least bit delirious, while the cloverleafs of the Major Deegan are picked out in heroic detail.)

And our map—what will it show that we can't see yet? "I really believe that the Map will change everything," Alan Leidner says. "Because now we will have a record of everything that happens. We'll be able to watch one particular tree grow, die, get replanted, and it will all be on the Map. Or watch a building rise, decay, and get torn down. A hundred years from now, people will be able to compare their version of the Map and our version of the Map and say, 'Look, that's how it was, and this is how it is.' History begins today." Yet the Map, being all maps to all men, will, in its nature, remain forever unfinished. It may be the first great map in which the old cartographic function, to point a path, matters less than a new one: to provide a picture of everything, in depth, in case, for now. ◆



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LETTER FROM EUROPE

THE CARPENTRAS AFFAIR

After ten years, a hundred arrests, four confessions, and a trial, can the mystery of a desecrated cemetery be solved?

BY JANE KRAMER

May, in Carpentras, is the month the rain stops, the fruit trees flower, and the air turns balmy and seductive. People who live there say that May belongs to them, by which they mean that they have one good month before the sun turns punishing and the fields begin to parch and the only people on the streets from noon to sundown are the Parisians with summer houses. Carpentras is one of the ancient towns of the Vaucluse, twelve miles east of Avignon, in Provence, and May is when it looks exactly like the Provence of picture books and postcards, when the *oliviers* shimmer and the vineyards of the Côtes du Ventoux make patchworks on the beds of lavender and furse that open at the edge of town, near the old walled cemetery where Carpentras's Jews have buried their dead since the fourteenth century.

The cemetery is famous—the oldest Jewish cemetery in use in Europe. It was deeded to the *Juifs du Pape*, the Jews who lived in Carpentras under the protection of the Avignon popes, and, while very few people outside Carpentras have ever seen it, it has considerable historic status. Carpentras's Jews complain that they get no money from the state to hire a gardener who would keep the place from running wild, which, in fact, it has. It is overgrown and deeply shadowed, less sacred than enchanted—a place of bramble bushes and wild climbing roses, of cedars, cypresses, and pines, and of old wild oaks that dapple the stone tombs of the Pope's Jews with light so pale it looks like moss. The trees have taken over the

There were none of the usual signatures to a desecration, but there was something peculiarly French about the one signature this crim cemetery. They have grown so tall and spread so wantonly in seven centuries that it is hard to see from one tombstone to another, and impossible to see from one end of the cemetery to the other, unless you happen to be standing on top of the old town aqueduct that runs parallel to the west wall, off the road to Bédoin, and is the only thing in Carpentras higher than the trees themselves.

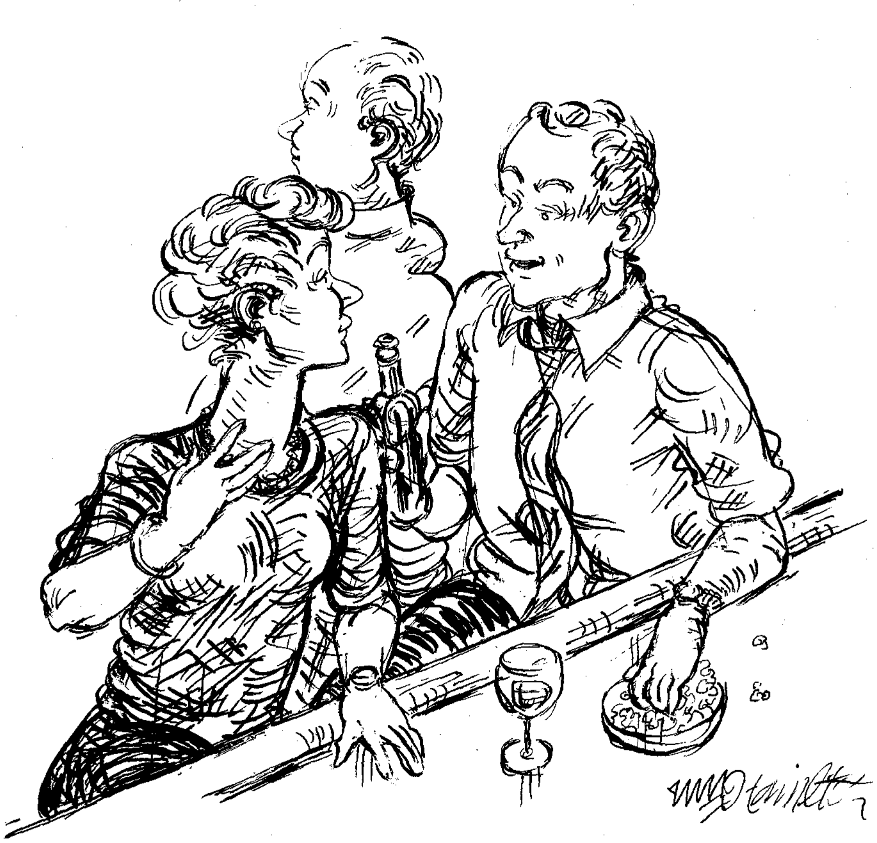
The cemetery is locked. Only Jews with relatives buried there have keys to a gate, and people in Carpentras like to say that the trees and the walls and the locked gates are what always kept the cemetery "busy" in warm weather. In Carpentras, if you were young and ardent and had spent a restless winter under the scrutiny of your Catholic family, you waited for the first nice night in May, collected your girl, and then the two of you scaled the west wall—ten feet high but buttressed into an easy slope for anyone in sneakers—and ran past the small cleared plots of the newly dead and into the cemetery woods, where the Pope's Jews and the wild oaks enclosed you. In Carpentras, this was called "courting." "I courted in the cemetery," a Carpentras grandfather will say when he is reminiscing. Or, sometimes, "I courted *chez les Juifs*." Courting in the cemetery was a Carpentras rite of passage—a step on the way to a shotgun wedding at the Cathedral of St. Siffrein and a funeral that ended at the town cemetery, which is rational and severe, with straight, swept gravel paths and tombs laid out in rows, like little villas in a housing project. For a long time, the lovers had the Jewish cemetery (in a manner of speaking) to themselves. Then, sometime into the nineteen-eighties, other people began to crowd them. A group of schoolboys started playing *jeux de rôle* at night in the cemetery, inventing a spooky Carpentras cross between "Dead Poets Society" and Dungeons & Dragons. A group of North African workers, or so it was said, was drinking at night in the cemetery, figuring it was one place where the mullahs who prowled the Carpentras Arab quarters wouldn't think to go. By then, there were very few Jews left in Carpentras to guard the cemetery—no more than twenty or thirty families. Most of the descendants of the *Juifs du Pape* were long gone—scattered and assimilated after the Revolution—and Carpentras's "new Jews" were nearly all people who had fled the first rumblings of Arab insurrection in Morocco and Tunisia and Algeria in the nineteen-fifties, and who never visited the cemetery in the spring, anyway, unless someone in what they called "the Community" died; North African Jews do not, by tradition, enter cemeteries during the forty-nine days between Passover, which usually

MAGNUM

'id have—a marble plaque, looted from a nearby tomb, that said, "From the neighbors." Photograph by Patrick Zachmann.

falls in April, and Shabuoth, in May, which is the Hebrew Pentecost. It could be said—and undoubtedly has been—that the only people in Carpentras who didn't get to enjoy the charms of the Jewish cemetery in its busiest month were the Jews who owned it. So many other people availed themselves of its shadowy reaches that the most surprising thing—at least at first—about what happened there on a mild May night in 1990 may be that no one admitted to having seen or heard it happening. Even today—ten years, fifteen hundred depositions, a hundred arrests, four confessions, and a trial later—no Carpentrasians besides one young woman with a strong imagination and a psychiatric record claim to know anything about it that they couldn't have read in the papers. All anyone will acknowledge is that sometime between sundown on May 8th and sunrise on May 9, 1990, a group of people scaled the cemetery wall, toppled thirty-four tombstones, and then proceeded to dig up the grave of an old Jewish rug merchant named Félix Germon, who had died, peacefully, that April, pry open his coffin, unwind his shroud, and carry his decomposing corpse to a tombstone sixty feet away, where they left him lying naked beneath a marble plaque, looted from a nearby tomb, that said, "*De la part des voisins,*" with a Star of David planted on his chest and the pointed pole of a beach umbrella disappearing between his legs—impaling him, for all intents and purposes. All anyone will acknowledge is that the small city of Carpentras, which had always thought of itself as a tolerant town, a welcoming town—"a symbol of friendship," the guidebooks said—is famous now as a symbol of perverse prejudice and annihilating disregard.

There is a story in every reporter's life—it can be as small as an encounter or as big as a war—that for some reason can be neither shaken nor resolved. The story gets into your head and settles there, and you keep returning to it, looking for some clue, some secret or deception, even some "truth," that will make you understand whatever it is you've been searching for, and maybe free you from your obsession. The *affaire du cimetière*, as most of France still calls it, is, for me, that story. I wasn't in France when it happened, but I did know Carpentras. I had spent summers in the Vaucluse, and I remembered Carpentras's Friday market, under a canopy of plane trees, and the peddlers hawking lavender honey and bolts of pretty Provençal cotton from the backs of trucks. I remembered an old synagogue, near the Carpentras courthouse, where the Pope's Jews had carved a *mikvah* into the stone twenty feet underground, and the Prophet Elijah sat, invisible, on a velvet chair in a niche of the pulpit wall and kept the *mohel's* knife steady during circumcisions. But what I remembered most was that Carpentras was a closed place, and not particularly friendly. Its welcome was perfunctory and commercial. It seemed to be saying, "Buy something and go home, there's nothing to interest you here"—which may be why, picking up the paper in London on the morning of May 11, 1990, I clipped the story about the desecration.



"I'm on sabbatical from a marriage in Lewiston, Maine."

It was a strange crime. No one had died. Legally, there was no "victim." Yet there was, of course, a victim, and the images of Félix Germon's second death were threatening images, hideous shadow parodies of violation and torture and murder. There were none of the usual signatures to a desecration—a swastika, say, or a "Heil Hitler." But it struck me that there was something peculiarly French about the one signature it did have—the plaque with its "From the neighbors"—and maybe even something French about the act of murdering a dead Jew. By the time I got back to France, late in June, the story of Félix Germon was a national obsession, and in short order it was mine. I started reading about "*l'après Carpentras.*" I read that thirty-two Jewish tombstones in a Paris suburb called Clichy-sous-Bois had been smeared with blood-red swastikas; I read that someone had left a pile of human skulls, blood-smeared bones, swastikas, and Jewish stars in a classroom at a school in Gien. But the fact of Félix Germon made Carpentras different. Clichy-sous-Bois and Gien were news. Carpentras was a whole unspoken history of complicity.

The first Jew in France is thought to have been the son of a princely Palestine family, exiled in 53 A.D. by a Roman prefect wary of the family's purchase on influence, and it's probably accurate to say that ever since then the French have juggled a rhetoric of sanctuary with a reality of intense prejudice. People in the Resistance used to describe the Vichy laws against Jews by saying that Vichy didn't kill Jews, only put them on a train for Germany. And, in the half-century that followed Vichy, every French government has had, in one way or another, to confront the denial that Vichy tapped. A few years into the *affaire du cimetière*, I went to see a legendary colonel of the Gendarmerie Nationale named Jean-Louis Recordon—the man who, in 1989, discovered the missing chief of Vichy's Lyons *milice* hiding comfortably in a Nice monastery. At the time we met, France was trying to absorb the news that its Socialist President, François Mitterrand, had once been decorated by Pétain for his service in the Vichy cause, and Recordon told me that to understand the country's obsession with Carpentras I had to accept that the President's history (Catholic nationalist as a boy; Pétainist as a young man; partisan "at the fifty-ninth second") was in many ways France's history. He saw Vichy as the ghost hovering over Carpentras's desecrated cemetery and France's political conscience. And the truth was that over the few years before 1990 that ghost seemed to have materialized. Four and a half million of the country's thirty million voters had voted for Jean-Marie Le Pen in the Presidential elections of 1988, turning Le Pen from a rabble-rouser on the far fringes of the country's populist right into a powerful national politician. Le Pen had learned his politics as a paratrooper in Algeria, fighting to keep the colony French; he had made his reputation by defending the torture of Arab prisoners, his money by insinuating himself into the household (and into the last will and testament) of a doped and dying reactionary Paris millionaire, and his contribution to French political discourse by claiming that all the country's problems—from unemployment to AIDS—were due to the pollution of French blood and French purpose by foreigners. Le Pen was hard put to define "French blood" in a country where every third person had a foreign grandparent. He was even hard put to define "foreigner," since more than half of the people he seemed to consider foreign were by birth or naturalization French citizens—including the country's four million Arab citizens and its six hundred thousand Jewish ones. Still, at the time of the desecration, there were towns all over France with militants from the Front National, the party Le Pen had founded, sitting on municipal councils. (Carpentras had two.) There were towns like Toulon that would soon have Front National mayors, and a town called Saint-Gilles, near Nîmes, that already had one. The Front National didn't suggest killing foreigners (though there were certainly people in France who did). What the Front wanted was to put foreigners on trains. It was, I think, the echo of the past in that—the claim to Frenchness in that—which fixed the country's attention on the murder of a dead Jew, and persuaded the other parties, the respectable parties, that there was some justice, not to mention advantage to themselves, in encouraging that attention. Carpentras became a cause.

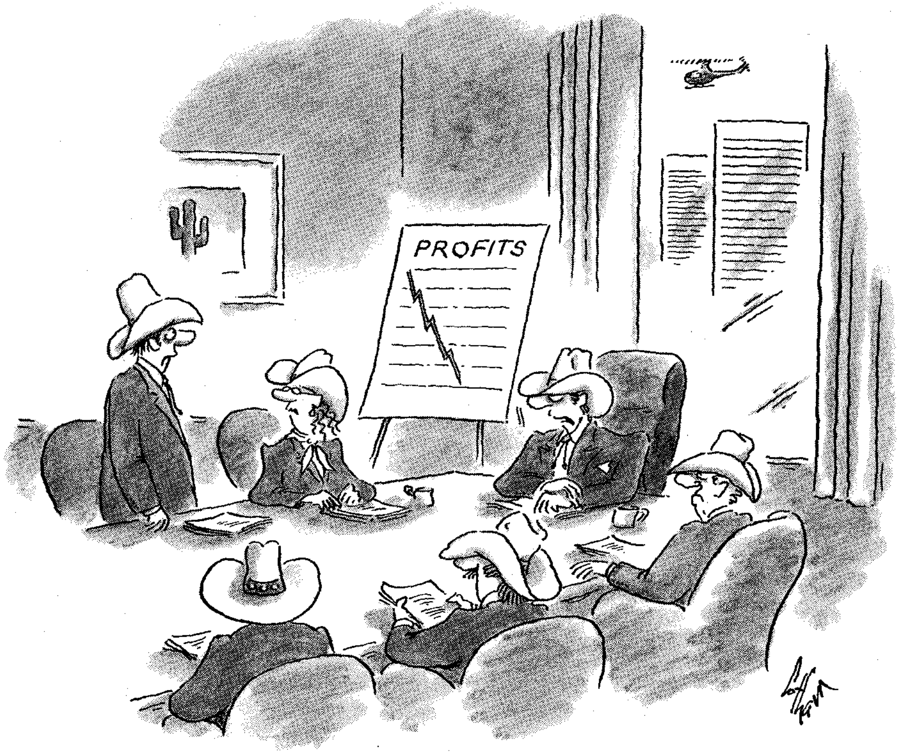
T-Bone
LAMB LOIN
Victoria Roberts

"For some reason, I'm getting nicer. Where will it end?"

• •

Carpentras was Rashomon. There were people who swore—it seemed to them simple common sense—that neo-Nazi skinheads had dug up Félix Germon. There were people who swore that thugs from the Front National had done it, or that "paramilitary monks" from a local monastery, in the village of Le Barroux, which the Front National helps to support, had done it. There were people who swore that the Socialists, looking for a pretext to ban or at least to discredit parties like the Front National, and to close monasteries like the one at Le Barroux, had done it. There were people who swore that Arabs had done it; there were people who swore that Jews had done it, hoping that Arabs would be blamed. There were even Jews—secular, sophisticated Paris Jews—who swore that Jews had done it; they believed that Jewish fanatics from a synagogue in Marseilles had dug up Félix Germon to make the point that Jews like Félix, who had married a Catholic and had bought his carpets from Muslims in North Africa, were not welcome in Jewish cemeteries. Agents from Renseignements Généraux, the agency that spies on Frenchmen for the French police, swore that Mossad had done it, in order to unite France against Arab claims on Israel; and officers at the Gendarmerie Nationale swore that kids from Carpentras—"the drugged, drunk, dissipated golden youth of Carpentras," the papers called them—had done it, in order to show off, or just to relieve the tedium of provincial life.

Television crews arrived, with cash in



“Oh, stop your frettin’.”

• •

hand, and spread it around in local bars to any of those kids who would give an interview, and the kids themselves went into business selling snapshots of each other, dressed up for black masses and “satanic rites,” to magazines like *Paris Match*. For a while, even Félix Germon’s widow, Magdeleine, was being marketed by a nephew who had installed himself as “Mme. Germon’s manager.” Everybody had something to say about Carpentras, from the President and the Prime Minister and the Interior Minister to the ubiquitous Elie Wiesel, who drove up from the Cannes Film Festival for a ceremony at the cemetery which attracted ten thousand mourners, half the Cabinet, the Grand Rabbi of Paris, and a delegation of imams from the Avignon mosque. Everybody, that is, except most of the people in Carpentras over the age of twenty-five. Those people were still saying, “Go home—there’s nothing to interest you here.”

A year later, in the summer of 1991, I made the first of what would be five trips to Carpentras. In the course of those trips, I met hundreds of people and made two friends: a local doctor named Jean-François Brun, who at the time was the leader of the Socialist Party faction on the Carpentras city council, and his wife, Martine, who was a child psychologist. I suspect that what made us friends to begin with was that Jean-François was the first and one of the few adults I interviewed in the course of nine years who didn’t demand to know, straight off, what could be interesting to a “stranger” about the *affaire du cimetière*, or what it had to do with Carpentras—the first one who said that, yes, the affair *was* interesting.

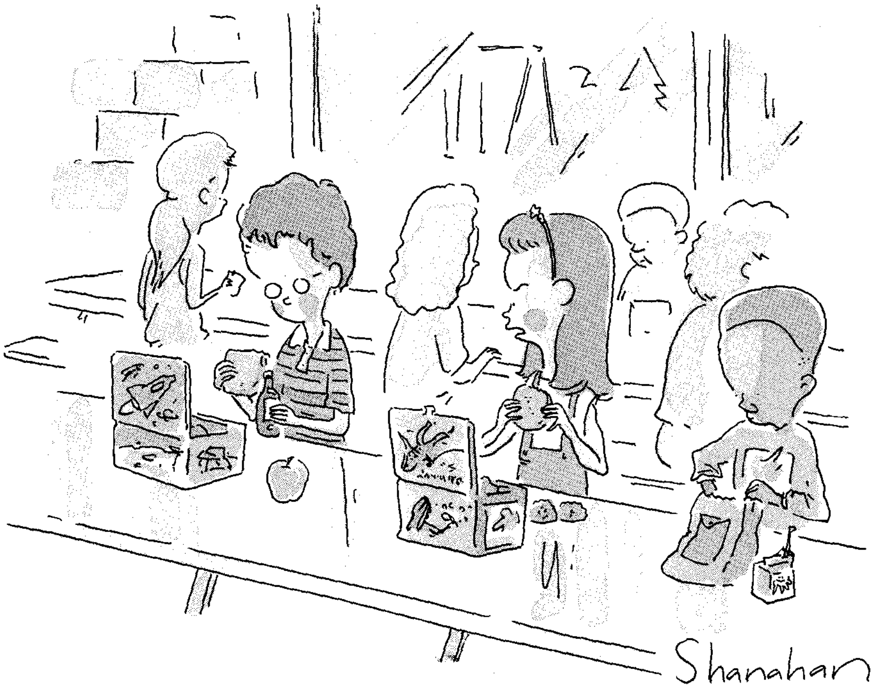
Jean-François was not only Carpentras’s rheumatologist, its reigning Socialist, and the guardian angel of its rugby club—second place in the Division A French League finals. He was also, like his father before him, the unofficial Carpentras historian. In my notes from our first interview, I describe him as “a little like Alfred Newman, turning fifty; sandy red hair, pale blue eyes, freckles, boy’s smile, nice round friendly face.” And I was much taken by his style—baggy corduroys and a yellow pullover and the lid of an old jam jar for an ashtray—especially after a couple of weeks of the local *notables*, in bad ties and monogrammed shirts, receiving me with scowling courtesy in Louis XVI offices. Jean-François was an intellectual. He had a fine, quizzical mind and a positively Balzacian view of Carpentras. Bruns had been living there since at least the fifteenth century, and the longest Jean-François had ever been away was the ten years he spent studying medicine in Montpellier. When he married Martine, who was from Lyons, and her friends started visiting, he said to them all, “You see, I can stay in Carpentras and the world comes here.” He had a remarkable library, full of ethnographic journals and voyages (and what were certainly the only complete sets of James Thurber and Carson McCullers in town). It was famous locally for its vast collection of books and pictures and documents and newspapers from Carpentras or about Carpentras, some of them dating from the sixteenth century, but what interested me most were the bound volumes of a turn-of-the-century Dreyfusard weekly paper, *L’Action Républicaine*, that was published by Jean-François’s grandfather Joseph Brun—a bookseller, Catholic by birth but, like his grandson, fiercely republican by conviction. The paper had survived for fifteen years, and Alfred Dreyfus himself had read it. I was intrigued by the fact that Captain Dreyfus, court-martialled and convicted in 1894 on false charges of having spied for Germany, had had a Carpentras connection. The Dreyfus affair, with the Jewish captain at its center, had been a defining moment in the country’s consciousness, a moment that had stirred French passions the way the cemetery affair seemed to be doing now. It had unleashed a wave of anti-Semitism so vicious and so violent that it put the country at the brink of civil war, and understanding it was part of understanding the history of any French town—and maybe even of understanding the conviction among so many Carpentrasians that, whatever soul-searching was going on in the rest of France in the aftermath of the *affaire du cimetière*, it had nothing to teach them about themselves. Roland Magnet, the Carpentras police chief, insisted to me that the town was “tranquil and perfect.” André Chapon, the state prosecutor, preferred to compare it to “a superb rosé.” Even Fréddy Haddad, the young doctor from Tunisia who was the president of Carpentras’s dwindling Jewish Community, wanted me to know how beautifully everyone in Carpentras got along—"like brothers."

Carpentras seemed to see itself as a town out of the folklore of *la France profonde*, full of cranky but benign characters—people who shared a history and had the same memories and understood them in the same way. But the truth was there weren't any towns like that in France by the nineteen-nineties. Carpentras, in spite of itself, was a modern French city of twenty-nine thousand people, a polyglot place, a place of immigration and emigration, and the most profoundly "French" thing about it was probably its diversity. There were the old Carpentras families, like Jean-François's. There were the Jewish families. And there were also two thousand *pieds-noirs*—French-colonial families who had continued the exodus out of North Africa, fleeing en masse in the early sixties, when France was pulling out its last troops. The *pieds-noirs* chose Carpentras mainly because the land and the climate and the color of the sky reminded them of home. They didn't always like Carpentras—they found the people cold—but, even so, they hadn't expected that thirty years later they would be sharing the city with the Arabs they had fled. And by 1990 there were at least as many Arabs as *pieds-noirs* in Carpentras. Most of them were French citizens or residents, but many were migrant farmworkers—France's "economic immigrants"—saving what they could for a house or a shop back home. They were crowded into small, illegal apartments in the old center (the Arabs with papers lived mainly in public housing), while the *pieds-noirs* tended to live in villages where everyone voted Le Pen and an Arab didn't walk at night unless he worked for a *pied-noir* family. Oddly, there was nothing in Carpentras you could still call a Jewish neighborhood. The only place where Carpentras's Jews still lived together, so to speak, was in their cemetery.

There was one Dreyfus in the cemetery. Henriette, the Captain's oldest sister, had married a Valabrègue, and Valabrègue was one of the old Carpentras Jewish names, like Lunel, Milhaud, Naquet, and Crémieux—the names of the Jews who arrived when the Vaucluse was still a papal state called the Comtat Venaissin (which, in fact, outlasted the Avignon popes by centuries). The Dreyfuses themselves were Alsatian. After the Franco-Prussian War, the family established a residency in Carpentras because Henriette was already there; Alfred, at thirteen, was the youngest child. They were the "new Jews" then, solidly bourgeois and arguably more welcome than the Jews of the old Comtat (who were given the choice of spending their lives in a teeming ghetto or of getting themselves baptized and going to church through a "Jewish door," under a lintel relief of rats gnawing at a ball), though they were never tempted to actually settle. Alfred was the one who liked Carpentras. He spent his school holidays there, and made sure that his own two children were sent there after his court-martial, to escape the Paris mobs. But there were mobs in Carpentras, too, then. When the Captain himself went back, five years later—he got on a train for Carpentras the night after his pardon—the golden youth of 1899 took to the streets in a frenzy, and the town's Jews bolted their shutters and barricaded their doors, and by the next morning the walls of their houses were smeared with filth and covered with graffiti at least as ominous as "From the neighbors." Seven months later, the Alfred Dreyfuses left for Switzerland.

Henriette stayed, and eventually one of the Captain's nephews, Henri Dreyfus, moved there. He was the mayor of Carpentras for seventeen years. His daughter is the last Carpentras Dreyfus, and by the time Félix Germon was disinterred she had disappeared into the life of the town the way, you could say, her great-aunt Henriette had disappeared into the life of the cemetery. Henriette's tomb was becoming faded and overgrown—nearly indistinguishable from the small gray slabs of the Pope's Jews, which were carved with a simple star and sat so deep in the brush and the tall grass that in summer, if you wanted to see them, you had to carry a stick to scare the snakes away.

The desecration was discovered by a widow named Thérèse Grosajt. Mme. Grosajt had been raised in Warsaw, and knew nothing at all about North African Jewish cemetery taboos. Early on the morning of May 10th, she and her daughter went to the cemetery to tend to her husband's grave, which was near Félix's. She unlocked the west gate, saw the headstones lying all over the ground, and suddenly came upon Félix's corpse. She hadn't known Félix, but then not many people in Carpentras had known him. The first time most Carpentrasians even heard the name Germon was the day Mme. Grosajt went to the cemetery, although by the



"Ewww—Cabernet with tuna fish?"

evening news Félix was Carpentras's best-known citizen, and after that it didn't much matter that he had seen the town for the first time only at the age of eighty, or that he had moved there because, at eighty, he was looking for what he described to his wife as "an enclave of peace"—someplace appropriate, he said, for an old man thinking about eternity.

Félix was born in a town called Sousse, in Tunisia, and he had put off thinking about eternity when he was eighteen and went to Paris and settled into the Tunisian Jewish neighborhood that began at a street of Armenian rug dealers and ended at the Folies-Bergère. He might never have even heard of Carpentras if he hadn't followed Magdeleine Ferro down the Rue Saint-Lazare one morning in May of 1942, tipped his hat, and said, "My name is Germon. I've been looking at your legs for the last four blocks." Magdeleine was from Carpentras, and she had no intention of going home, now that she was practically a Folies girl herself—a model, anyway, for the Folies-Bergère's famous posters—and "under the protection of the man who painted Josephine Baker." She preferred champagne to the *vin de table* of the Côtes du Ventoux, and she once told me that Félix had won her heart the day they met by escorting her to the Galeries Lafayette to buy a lace brassiere. Four days later, Jews were ordered to identify themselves by wearing a yellow star. Magdeleine rented an apartment for herself and Félix in her own name, and she probably saved his life, since two months after *that* thirteen thousand of Paris's Jews—most of them foreign, like Félix—were rounded up and taken to Drancy for deportation to the camps. "What would you have done?" she said, nicely, when she told me the story. "M. Germon pleased me."

Félix and Magdeleine married after the Liberation, and Magdeleine retired from the posters and became a respectable bourgeois Paris housewife and decorated a respectable bourgeois Paris flat near the Place des Ternes. She discovered Chanel and Cartier. As Félix made money, buying and selling carpets, she accumulated more gold and pearls and diamonds than most of the women in Carpentras put together. She was nearly eighty herself when she brought Félix to Carpentras, but she was still not ready for an "enclave of peace" in the shadow of Mont Ventoux. Félix, on the other hand, was taken with the town. He said, "I want to finish my life in Carpentras," and, since he still pleased her, Magdeleine could not refuse him. They had one year together there. Magdeleine frequented the tearoom at the Pâtisserie Jouvaud, a grande dame among the drip-dry tourists and the Carpentras matrons, and Félix read his *Méridional* at the Bar des Sports and played cards with a group of *pieds-noirs* who voted Le Pen and wanted the Arabs in Carpentras, and possibly even the Jews like Félix, deported. He died in an Avignon hospital on April 14, 1990, and was buried in what his family called "complete anonymity." If he had any enemies, no one in Carpentras knew it.

Roland Magnet, the Carpentras police chief, was known as a man of secrets that everybody else knew, and one of those secrets was that nobody bothered to tell him about Félix Germon until late on the morning of May 10th. Thérèse Grosajt told her son, Alain, and Alain told the Community, in the person of an old Jew named Sammy Lévy, who looked after the synagogue, and Sammy told his friend Simon Kouhana, who looked after the cemetery, and it was Simon who finally called the police. When he did, the police chief didn't believe him. "Are you sure there's a body?" Magnet kept asking. In fact, he was barely in time to see it, because when he got to the cemetery the Grand Rabbis of Paris and Marseilles—North African themselves and famously doctrinaire—had already called in to demand that Félix Germon be cleaned up fast and put back into the ground, as it says to do in the Torah. And those were also the orders from André Chapon, the state prosecutor, whose views on the subject of bodies littering his jurisdiction were so strong that even a year later he would interrupt himself in the middle of one of his frequent eulogies to a local rosé called Beaumont de Ventoux to say that he had never seen a corpse a month after it was buried, and it was "not pleasant." Chapon was known locally as a man of such exquisite enological sensitivity that he could sniff the Château Pesquié aging in the caves of Mormoiron and tell you the temperature of the fermentation, but his reputation as the highest judicial representative of the French Re-

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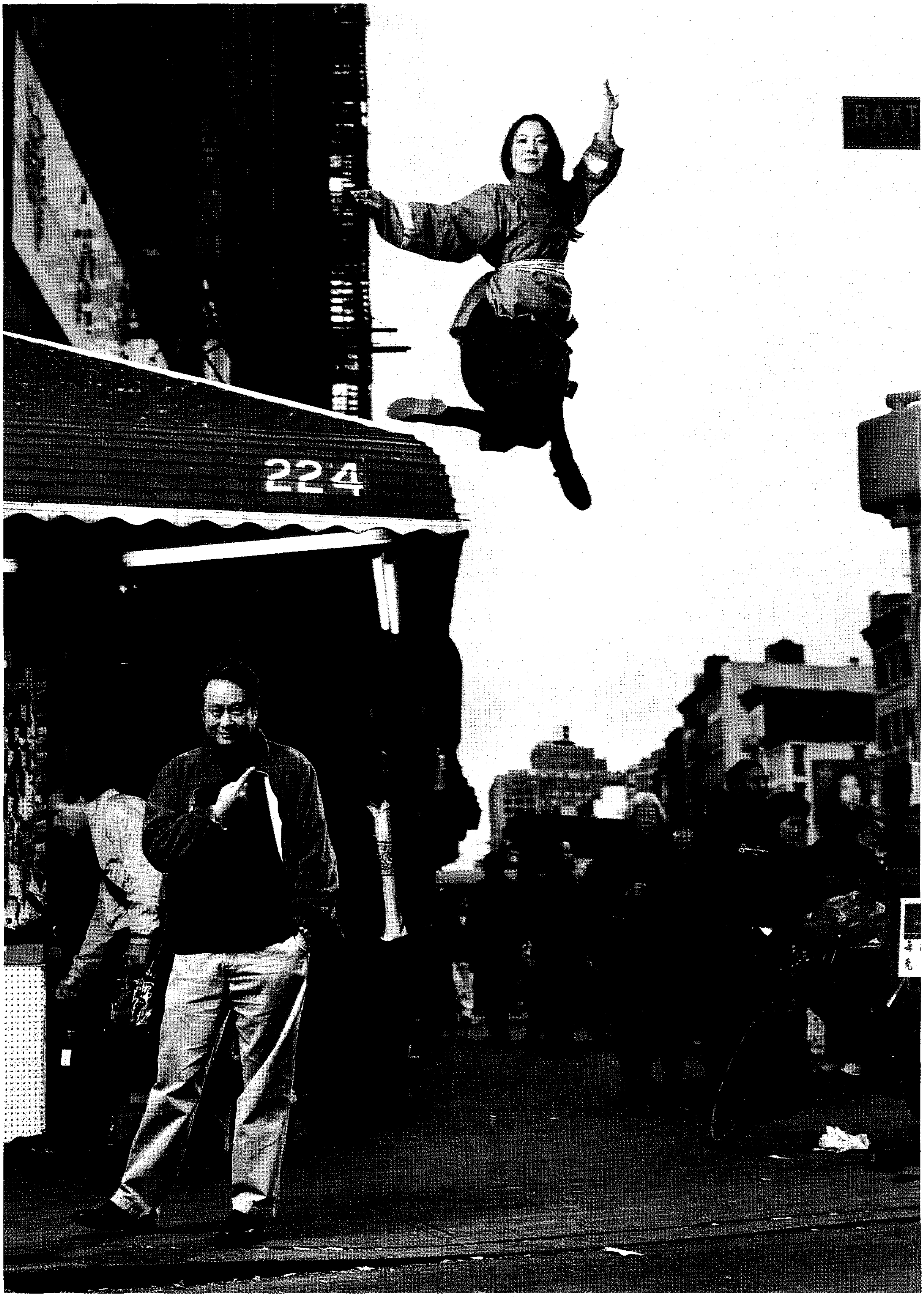
SHOWCASE BY
MARTIN SCHOELLER

HONG KONG FLYERS

At the Cannes Festival première of Ang Lee's latest film, a romantic martial-arts fantasy called "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," the audience kept breaking into applause during the fight scenes. Set during the Qing dynasty and starring two of Hong Kong's biggest superstars, Chow Yun Fat and Michelle Yeoh, the story begins when a warrior (Chow) decides to retire, giving his sword to another gifted martial artist (Yeoh) for safekeeping. The two warriors have an unspoken love for each other, and when the prized weapon is stolen they team up to retrieve it. The fight scenes are choreographed by Yuen Wo-Ping, the martial-arts guru who also choreographed "The Matrix," and he has the actors climbing the walls of Beijing's temples and running along moonlit rooftops in a highly aestheticized film style that the Chinese call *Wuxia Pian*.

In these movies, characters possess magical abilities—gravity-free leaps and lightning-fast reflexes—that allow them to execute near-superhuman feats of derring-do; here, the indomitable Chow Yun Fat is given a hushed fight scene atop the gently swaying branches of a bamboo grove which may well be a breakthrough for the genre. It's Michelle Yeoh, however, and another actress of great athletic prowess, Zhang Ziyi, who carry most of the spirited action. Hong Kong film aficionados may feel that Lee has made a great leap of his own—martial-arts movies are generally masculine adventures—but he's shown, in films like "Sense and Sensibility" and "The Ice Storm," that he is eager to portray female characters who struggle against the accepted social order. In Yeoh, he has found a woman who is pure silk and steel—she can perform an aerial ballet full of swordplay that's as dynamic and physical as a Gene Kelly dance.

—Bruce Diones



SABA

public in Carpentras was less exquisite. He ordered calls placed to the Carpentras pathologist and the Carpentras undertaker, virtually at the same time, and the result was that the pathologist barely had a chance to estimate the time of exposure before the undertaker arrived at the cemetery, along with a rabbi from Avignon who ritually cleaned the corpse. The undertaker closed the coffin and filled in the hole.

EUPHORIA

Late winter, sky darkening after school
& groceries bought from Shop-Mart,
My mother leaves me parked on Diamond
To guard her Benz, her keys half turned
So I can listen to the Quiet Storm
While she smokes a few white pebbles
At the house crumbling across the street.

I clamber to the steering wheel,
Undo my school tie, just as Luther Vandross
Starts in on that one-word tune "Creepin'."
The dashboard's panel of neon glows,
And a girl my age, maybe sixteen or so,
In a black miniskirt, her hair crimped
With glitter, squats down to pane glass,

And asks, *A date, baby? For five?*
Outside, street light washes the avenue
A cheap orange: garbage swirling

By then, the cemetery was bustling. Fréddy Haddad arrived, representing the Jewish Community. Jean-Claude Andrieu, the mayor (who was away that day), dispatched his deputy mayor to represent the town. Cheik Khaled, the Carpentras *sous-préfet*, arrived, representing the Vaucluse prefect. And he had a message. He told the assembled *notables* that Pierre Joxe, the French Minister of the Interior, was at a meeting in Nîmes, not far from Carpentras, and had just heard about the desecration. He said that Joxe was so shocked and distressed that *he* would be arriving, too, in the afternoon, with a helicopter and an entourage of reporters. Magnet, by his own account, went into action. The police chief thought it would look terrible for a minister of the French Republic to have to step out of a helicopter into a messy cemetery, and so—as he put it to me a year later, just before he went into retirement and left Carpentras, saying that if you wanted to reach him you'd have to look for a small sailboat somewhere off Guadeloupe—he ordered the cemetery swept. Jean-François, as Carpentras's ranking Socialist, guided Joxe through the cemetery, followed by all the *notables*, most of them now in yarmulkes. He says that, aside from the thirty-four toppled tombstones, the cemetery that all of France (and most of Europe) saw on the evening news, with so many important people walking around it and so much evidence swept away with the brambles and the dead leaves, had never looked as clean.

When Parisians want to evoke images of truly exasperating provincialism, they often use Carpentras. "The widow from Carpentras" is French for "the lady from Dubuque," but in May of 1990, to a lot of Carpentrasians, that didn't seem like such a terrible thing to say. They felt that the *affaire du cimetière* had got out of hand; that after Joxe's visit it was Paris against the provinces, strangers against neighbors, north against south, liberal hysteria against the tactful silences of people who have to get along. After a week of furious attention—ten thousand people praying and weeping for Félix Germon in Carpentras's Jewish cemetery; two hundred thousand people, led by the President of the Republic, marching for Félix Germon in Paris—Carpentrasians began to wonder whether there would even have been an *affaire du cimetière* if Pierre Joxe hadn't happened to be in the neighborhood on May 10th, talking about forest fires to a group of prefects, and heard about an umbrella pole "penetrating" a Jewish corpse. To their minds, the crime against Félix Germon was turning into a crime against their privacy and their good name—turning what the prosecutor assured them had probably been "a couple of people from the neighborhood who overstepped the tolerable" into something exaggerated, something political, that had less to do with Carpentras than with a Socialist government's use of Carpentras to exploit the issue of anti-Semitism in France. The night before the discovery of the desecration, Le Pen had gone on television and declared that France's Jews had "too much power"; this was milder than what he had said on television a few years earlier—that Hitler's gas chambers were a "minor detail" in the history of the Second World War, and not "a revealed truth that everybody has to believe in"—but it was certainly a provocation. Or enough of a provocation that when Félix Germon was disinterred the government made the connection. Talking to the reporters at the cemetery, Pierre Joxe said, "When criminals are known, you have to denounce them, and this is the case here; I denounce racism, anti-Semitism, and intolerance." He didn't mention Le Pen by name, but the reference was clear. It wasn't long before Laurent Fabius, the Jewish President of the French National Assembly, was on television describing the impalement of Félix Germon and telling the country, in effect, *We know who did this*, and after that it was much too late to stop what Joxe described to me ruefully, years later, as "a media maelstrom."

Carpentras literally didn't know what to say or do, which wasn't surprising for a town whose idea of a media maelstrom was a stringer from Avignon covering its fall truffle market. Fréddy Haddad, convinced that the smartest thing a Jew in

A vacant lot; a crew of boys slap-boxing
On the corner, throwing back large swills
Of malt; even the sidewalk teeming with addicts,
Their eyes spread thin as egg whites.

She crams the crushed bill down
Her stockings, cradles & slides her palm
In rhythm to my hips' thrashing,
In rhythm to Luther's voice, which flutters
Around that word I now mistake for "Weep"
As sirens blast the neighborhood &
My own incomprehensible joy to silence.

Out of the house my mother steps,
As though returned from the ride of her life,
Studies pavement cracks for half-empty vials,
Then looks back at bricked-over windows
As though what else mattered—
A family, a dinner, a car, nothing
But this happiness so hard to come by.

—*Major Jackson*

Carpentras could do, even in the best of circumstances, was to avoid attention, had asked the Community not to talk to the press, and in the main the Community obliged him. Mayor Andrieu, who owned a gift shop in the middle of town and consequently had an interest in visitors—as long as they spent money and didn't stay—was willing to talk officially but reluctant to allude to anything as dark as anti-Semitism or racism; he made soothing, even cheerful, statements about good will and brotherly love in Carpentras, and in this he was outdone only by the two Front National members on the city council, who were hoping that Arabs were responsible and who referred to the desecration not as a racist crime but as a "crime against the French."

When Jean-François looks back on the first few months of the affair, and on his arguments with the Giscardian Mayor as to how to handle the reaction, he often says that Carpentras was so caught up in the trauma of losing its image of tolerance that the people running Carpentras forgot how easy it would have been to use that moment to do something *for* the image, like setting aside a week of commemoration, an affirmation of solidarity by a city that had welcomed Jews for seven hundred years. At the time, he and his friends were trying to make a case for "Enlightenment transparency." They maintained, reasonably, that you couldn't condemn a desecration at a Jewish cemetery without mentioning Jews, and they used all the words you weren't supposed to use in Carpentras: Xenophobia. Anti-Semitism. Racism. In July, they held a symposium on the desecration: *"La loi, les mots, le silence."* The Mayor refused to give them a hall in town, so they met in the country, at an agricultural high school. A lot of Lacanian psychoanalysts came.

French Napoleonic law says to bury your dead in coffins. The Torah says to return your dead "to dust," a command interpreted by the orthodox to mean that you put your dead directly into the earth, with nothing but shroud and tallith between the flesh and the dust it came from. The solution, for France's orthodox Jews, has been to drill small holes in the bottom of the coffins they were obliged to use, and that was what Fréddy Haddad made sure the undertaker had done for Félix Germon. He thought it was his duty, as president of the Community, to see that Félix started his journey back to dust quickly. He had prayed at Félix's funeral, and joined a minyan of ten men to chant the Kaddish over Félix's grave. He hadn't known or necessarily approved of Félix. It was the souls of seven hundred years that worried Fréddy. He said, "When a cemetery is violated, all the souls are tortured, and none of them can find peace." He agreed with the rabbis who wanted Félix Germon reburied. He agreed with the prosecutor, who wanted to avoid attention; and with the police chief, who wanted to make the cemetery pretty; and with the caretaker at the synagogue, who called everyone he knew and said, "We have to smother this affair." Fréddy maintained that "the best way to catch who did it would have been to pretend nothing happened," but I suspect what he really meant was "the best way to keep it from happening again." He seemed to believe that the longer people talked about Jews the less sympathy they would have for Jews. He didn't want a big public ceremony. He didn't want an autopsy; he knew that if Félix were moved from the cemetery, and then returned to be buried a third time, it would mean another minyan and another Kaddish—and, in the end, more journalists and more attention. But when he drove home from the cemetery that first day, past the police cars and television vans circling his house and frightening his children, the phone was already ringing. By noon the next day, the Grand Rabbi of France had called to say, "The President of France wants to reassure you." And, with that, any hope that Fréddy had had of smothering the affair was gone. "They left me no choice," he said once. "I had patients to think of. I was under so much pressure." He was a good man, but not, as Jean-François put it, "*à la hauteur de ses responsabilités.*"

Fréddy wasn't a specialist like Jean-François. He was a family doctor, with an office in a village a few miles west of Carpentras. Until that day at the cemetery, he had lived what he thought of as a quiet, useful life. Félix Germon was perhaps the worst thing that had happened to him since he was thirteen and a couple of Arab kids attacked him on the road from school, and he came home with a torn coat and knife slashes all over his notebook. That was in Tunis, a few hours up the coast from Félix Germon's home town. Fréddy's father was an *haut fonctionnaire* with the Tunisian railroad, and when the family moved to France, a few years later, Fréddy did what was expected of the son of a displaced Jewish bureaucrat; he passed his bac and went to medical school in Montpellier—seven years after Jean-François—and then he settled down to start a practice. It wasn't a bad practice. Carpentras's North African Jews used him because he was one of them; the North African Arabs used him because he knew their world and spoke their language; the village farmers used him because his fee was fair and his advice simple. And he wasn't forbidding; he had a nice smile and a shock of straight black hair flopping over his forehead, and he often dressed like a student, in crewnecks and khakis and mud boots from a French knockoff of L. L. Bean. He could wash down a *steak frites* lunch with a shot of whiskey, saying, "It's hard to be kosher when you're not at home." But he was also a militant Zionist who, years earlier, had quit the Union of French Jewish Students over an invitation issued to some visiting Palestinians, and had founded his own group, under the umbrella of the biggest faction in Israel's Likud bloc. He dreamed about living in Israel, in a Jewish world, and it seemed to me he had a strong conviction that anti-Semitism was just below the surface of what often passed for other people's friendship. Yet the last time I saw Fréddy Haddad was in a small town a couple of hours into the Alpes Maritimes, where he was covering the practice of a Christian friend who was on his honeymoon. We talked, of course, about Carpentras. "All I wanted was to put the body back in the ground," he told me, "and not talk about it anymore. But it was very tiring. I was completely *débordé*."

The problem for Carpentras, over the first few years of the affair, was that despite the attentions of the Interior Minister and an investigation on a scale usually reserved for terrorist bombings and mass murders—more than sixty policemen on loan from other cities—no one even came close (or, more accurately, knew when he was close) to discovering the people who had dug up Félix Germon. "Without a perpetrator, without even a scapegoat, Carpentras became the villain" is what Jean-François was still saying, five years and no perpetrator later. By then, he was beginning to understand that most of the people who came to Carpentras didn't know, or care, anything about the town. The politicians who came were still arguing about whether Félix Germon had been "anatomically" or only "symbolically" impaled—as if that actually made a moral difference. The policemen who came were arguing about whether it was easier to dig up six cubic feet of earth covering a coffin if you were stoned on hashish (the golden-youth theory) or if you were drunk on beer and rotgut pastis (the Front National theory). The television celebrities who came were arguing about whether the theme of their next Carpentras exposé should be "rumors" or "shame" or "secrets." Jean-François knew that Carpentrasians were stung by the accusations, and at the same time were doing a terrible job of meeting those accusations without looking hostile or evasive or stupid, or desperately accusing one another. Even his friends wanted to forget the affair. They wanted to go on vacation and not have to confront the raised eyebrows and pious looks when they told someone on a beach a thousand miles from Carpentras where they came from. So did he.

"I make decisions as much with my gut as I do with my brain. Let's eat."

The police, meanwhile, went through their paces, following one lead after another—with time, more dutifully than deeply. The first people they had held for questioning were six skinheads linked vaguely to a group called the Parti Nationaliste Français et Européen, which was far to the right of even the Front National. It had been reasonable to suspect them, since the group had already been involved in a series of immigrant-hostel bombings that left one man dead and sixteen injured. (It was perhaps less reasonable to suspect that the young North African arrested next had something to do with the desecration; a week earlier, he had made a bet about circumambulating the top of the cemetery wall, and had fallen in, dead drunk, and broken his foot, and was still complaining about a lost sneaker.) And it wasn't entirely unreasonable to suspect that the

Front National itself might have been involved. Or, for that matter, Carpentras's golden youth, given the photographs of weird rituals some of the local kids were peddling—although it has to be said that, when you pressed the police to name them, Carpentras's golden youth seemed to include every youth in town, from Olivier, the Mayor's son, to Christophe, the tombstone-maker's son, to Mustafa, the son of the retired mason, and that the most sinister thing anyone had ever actually seen any of them do was to run riot through Carpentras a few years earlier, staging a war between Eliot Ness and Al Capone and shooting Q-tips out of plastic air guns. Their "Chicago war" was an adventure recounted to me in breathless and quite hilarious detail by Hubert, the son of the personnel director at the nuclear-energy plant north of Avignon, who had played the part of Capone's chauffeur. Hubert was bitter about the *affaire du cimetière* (but "cool," he insisted), having been interrogated himself for the better part of a day, owing to what he called "a serious problem with my alibi"; he had spent the nights of May 8th and 9th in bed with his girlfriend's best friend.

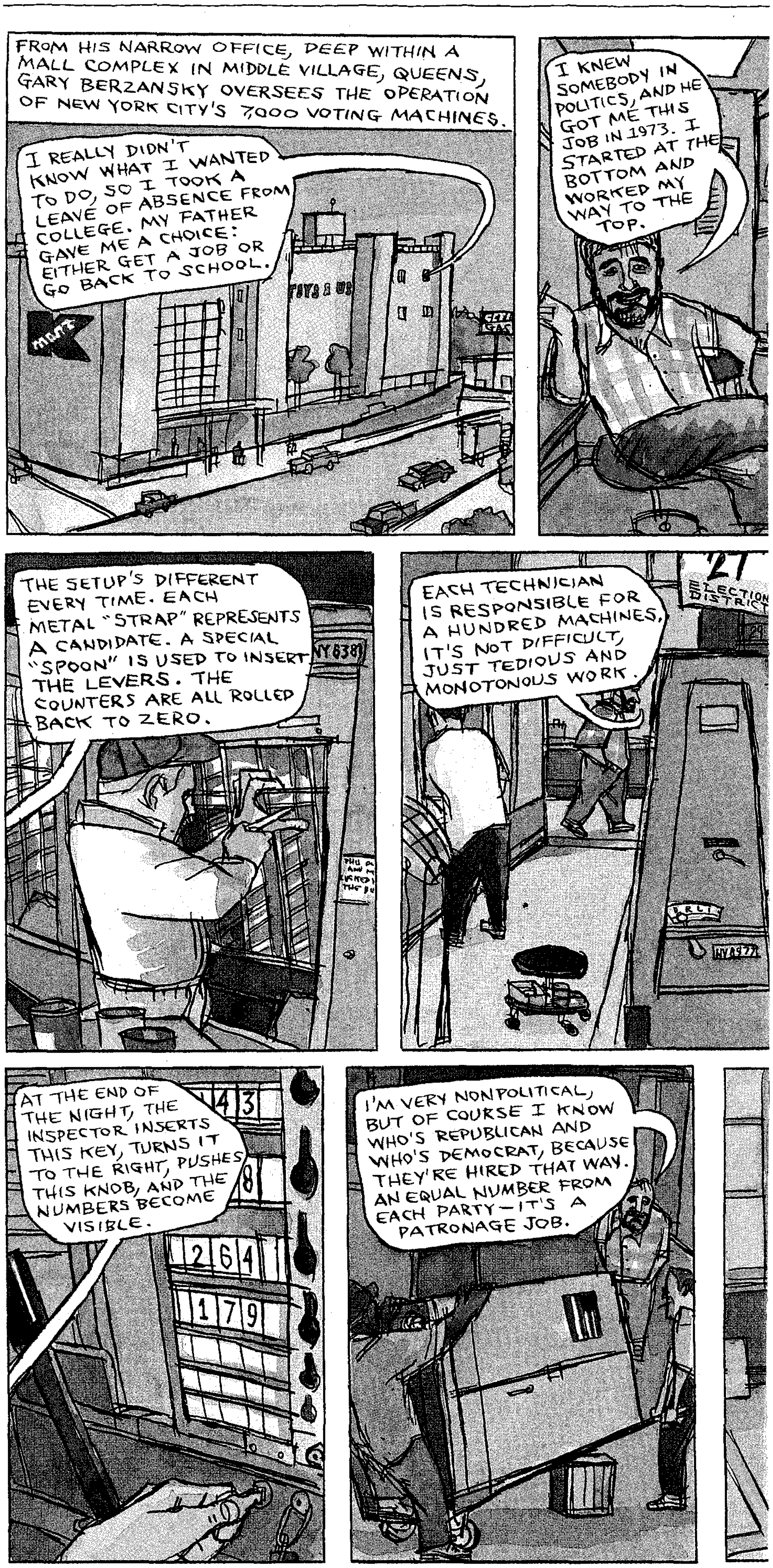
"I've had to be both mother and father to them."

It didn't take long for the police to discard the notion that Arabs had anything to do with disinterring Félix Germon. Two letters, signed ominously "Groupe Mohammed El Boukhima," had arrived at a local paper, claiming credit, and the paper had quickly printed those letters, but it was almost impossible to think of Carpentras as an Arab terrorist crime. The bombings that had taken the lives of forty people in France over the past ten years were terrorist crimes; Carpentras was, more accurately, a terrorizing crime. And there were no precedents. (Israel had reported an exhumation in one of *its* cemeteries, in 1984, but the culprits there were fanatical Jewish fundamentalists, convinced that converts and Reform Jews were insufficiently "Jewish" for a piece of Jewish ground.) Not even Carpentras's North African Jews believed that Arabs had anything to do with the desecration. "Arabs kill people, not corpses," one of them told me, grimly.

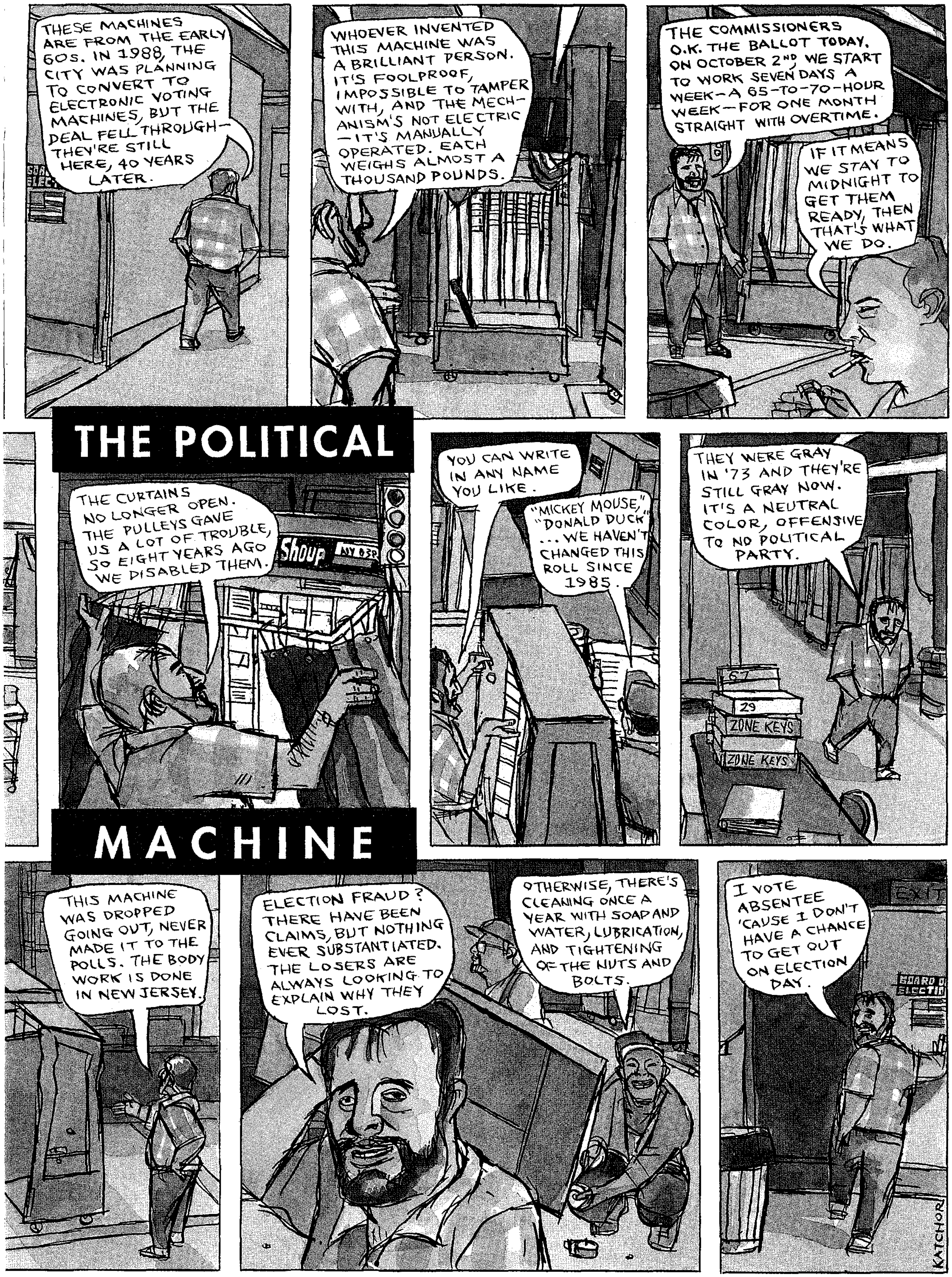
As for Mossad, the only person in Carpentras really to believe in the "Mossad *piste*" was the local agent of Renseignements Généraux, a genial, poker-playing bachelor named Jean-Louis Boyer, who is now, at fifty-four, married and the municipal police chief. A few years after the desecration, the agent who was Boyer's immediate superior in 1990 admitted to me that he had passed Boyer some "intelligence" involving Félix's secret "activities" on behalf of an Israeli-Palestinian accord, but I suspect that Boyer's Mossad theory had at least as much to do with his conviction that the only people smart enough to outfox him on his home turf were Mossad agents. (Félix's old friends in the Paris rug trade told me that the only secret activities Félix had ever undertaken involved getting expensive rugs through French customs.) Boyer claimed that the disinterment had been "a strong message from Israel to the Diaspora," a message against concessions in the Middle East, and both he and his boss assured me that it was "coded" in ways that any Jew would immediately understand (though not, as it happened, Pierre Joxe, whose mother was Jewish, or Laurent Fabius, or me). The Mossad theory went the way of the Arab theory, and so, eventually, did the mad-rabbi theory and the wily-Socialist theory. Carpentras, divided now between its golden-youth theorists and its Front National theorists, settled into its disgrace—but not into the anonymity most Carpentrasians wanted.

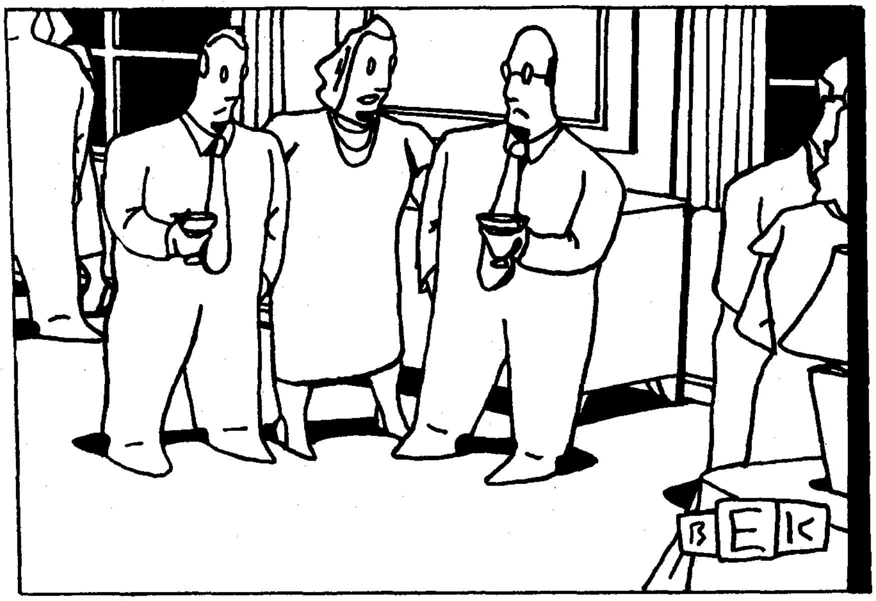
The *juge d'instruction* officially charged with the investigation was a young woman from Montbéliard named Sylvie Mottes. In May of 1990, Mme. Mottes was twenty-nine; she had worked in the Court of Appeals in Nancy for three years, and in Carpentras's tribunal for two months, and that was the total of her experience. (She once told me that what she had liked most about Carpentras, during those first two months, was how calm and friendly it seemed, after a big northern city like Nancy.) She was a delicate-looking woman, with pale-red hair and pale-pink skin, who came to the courthouse in the summer in a floppy sundress and sandals, but she was, by her own assessment, "stubborn, determined, and discreet," and not given to "convenient conclusions." And one of the things she was most determined to do in the case of Félix Germon was avoid accusing anybody because of rumors or pressure or her own unexpected celebrity. She made a few mistakes. She allowed her husband, who was a *commissaire* of the Police Judiciaire in Avignon, to run part of the investigation, and maintained that there was nothing compromising in the connection. (The French have no firm law on judicial conflict of interest.) And she was said to be too correct—"too northern"—because she wouldn't stand on the courthouse steps swapping rumors with reporters. She was certainly too correct to court the Carpentrasians with suggestions that any of the terrible things they were hearing about Mossad or golden youth or Socialist plots or Marseilles rabbis, or even about Le Pen, were true. But she kept the case open. By the time she agreed to see me, five years and fourteen hundred depositions into the affair, she had settled into a kind of routine: when the prosecutor sent her a note suggesting that it was time to forget about Félix Germon, she simply took the note and stapled it into the latest cemetery file.

By then, of course, the tombs had all been repaired. Fréddy Haddad had invented a protein supplement for Jewish athletes and was thinking about going into the kosher diet-food business. Magdeleine Germon, addled by age and shock and grief, and adrift in the attention, had come to believe that St. Jérôme had "entered" Félix, in his last days, prophesying catastrophe in Carpentras and giving Félix the martyrdom that the Saint himself never had. She had also decided that the Mayor was covering for his son and for his son's friends, and frequently said so, despite what must have been the advice of the earnest young Paris lawyer who had meanwhile volunteered to represent her. And through it all, Carpentras stayed news. Sylvie Mottes's open file began to haunt politicians, left and right. The only politician with any interest in *not* seeing Carpentras solved was Le Pen, who was having a field day with the affair. Le Pen kept accusing the Socialists, and especially Joxe, of mounting a conspiracy against him. He threatened to sue the government for damages, and, when the government changed and Joxe left the interior ministry for the Cour des Comptes, he staged a big "Carpentras protest" that ended on the Place Vendôme, in front of Joxe's new office, demanding "apologies, contrition, and reparation." A few days later, he rented a fast Paris train—"the Train of Truth," he called it—filled it with Front National recruits, and headed for Carpentras to repeat the protest at a rally of three thou-


FROM HIS NARROW OFFICE, DEEP WITHIN A MALL COMPLEX IN MIDDLE VILLAGE, QUEENS, GARY BERZANSKY OVERSEES THE OPERATION OF NEW YORK CITY'S 7000 VOTING MACHINES.
I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WANTED TO DO, SO I TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM COLLEGE. MY FATHER GAVE ME A CHOICE: EITHER GET A JOB OR GO BACK TO SCHOOL.
TOYS R US
I KNEW SOMEBODY IN POLITICS, AND HE GOT ME THIS JOB IN 1973. I STARTED AT THE BOTTOM AND WORKED MY WAY TO THE TOP.
THE SETUP'S DIFFERENT EVERY TIME. EACH METAL "STRAP" REPRESENTS A CANDIDATE. A SPECIAL "SPOON" IS USED TO INSERT THE LEVERS. THE COUNTERS ARE ALL ROLLED BACK TO ZERO.
NY6381
EACH TECHNICIAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR A HUNDRED MACHINES, IT'S NOT DIFFICULT, JUST TEDIOUS AND MONOTONOUS WORK.
27 ELECTION DISTRICT
AT THE END OF THE NIGHT, THE INSPECTOR INSERTS THIS KEY, TURNS IT TO THE RIGHT, PUSHES THIS KNOB, AND THE NUMBERS BECOME VISIBLE.
143
8
264
179
I'M VERY NONPOLITICAL, BUT OF COURSE I KNOW WHO'S REPUBLICAN AND WHO'S DEMOCRAT, BECAUSE THEY'RE HIRED THAT WAY. AN EQUAL NUMBER FROM EACH PARTY—IT'S A PATRONAGE JOB.

THE POLITICAL MACHINE


THESE MACHINES ARE FROM THE EARLY 60s. IN 1988, THE CITY WAS PLANNING TO CONVERT TO ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES, BUT THE DEAL FELL THROUGH—THEY'RE STILL HERE, 40 YEARS LATER.
WHOEVER INVENTED THIS MACHINE WAS A BRILLIANT PERSON. IT'S FOOLPROOF, IMPOSSIBLE TO TAMPER WITH, AND THE MECHANISM'S NOT ELECTRIC—IT'S MANUALLY OPERATED. EACH WEIGHS ALMOST A THOUSAND POUNDS.
THE COMMISSIONERS O.K. THE BALLOT TODAY. ON OCTOBER 2ND, WE START TO WORK SEVEN DAYS A WEEK—A 65-TO-70-HOUR WEEK—FOR ONE MONTH STRAIGHT WITH OVERTIME.
IF IT MEANS WE STAY TO MIDNIGHT TO GET THEM READY, THEN THAT'S WHAT WE DO.
THE CURTAINS NO LONGER OPEN. THE PULLEYS GAVE US A LOT OF TROUBLE, SO EIGHT YEARS AGO WE DISABLED THEM.
Shoup
YOU CAN WRITE IN ANY NAME YOU LIKE.
"MICKEY MOUSE," "DONALD DUCK" ... WE HAVEN'T CHANGED THIS ROLL SINCE 1985.
THEY WERE GRAY IN '73 AND THEY'RE STILL GRAY NOW. IT'S A NEUTRAL COLOR, OFFENSIVE TO NO POLITICAL PARTY.
67
29
ZONE KEYS
ZONE KEYS
THIS MACHINE WAS DROPPED GOING OUT, NEVER MADE IT TO THE POLLS. THE BODY WORK IS DONE IN NEW JERSEY.
ELECTION FRAUD? THERE HAVE BEEN CLAIMS, BUT NOTHING EVER SUBSTANTIATED. THE LOSERS ARE ALWAYS LOOKING TO EXPLAIN WHY THEY LOST.
OTHERWISE, THERE'S CLEANING ONCE A YEAR WITH SOAP AND WATER, LUBRICATION, AND TIGHTENING OF THE NUTS AND BOLTS.
I VOTE ABSENTEE 'CAUSE I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE TO GET OUT ON ELECTION DAY.
EXIT
BOARD OF ELECTIONS
KATCHOR



"I'm sure you two will discover that you're both plagued by a lot of the same nonexistent problems."

• •

sand people. And he wasn't the only person talking about lawsuits. By the mid-nineties, it seemed as if every French lawyer with an eye on a piece of the evening news had a Carpentras client—the most egregious being a Marseilles litigator named Gilbert Collard. Collard had found his way to a cousin of Félix Germon—an ingenuous postman from Avignon who sorted mail on the Marseilles-to-Toulouse train and who had encountered Félix for the first time when he was in the hospital, dying. He also found his way to the parents of a Carpentras schoolgirl who, two years after the desecration, had been discovered on the ground near her house, dying of a cerebral hemorrhage—the result either of climbing out of an upstairs window in the middle of the night to meet a boy and falling or, if you listened to Maître Collard, of a savage beating at the hands of the same drugged kids who had dug up Félix Germon as the coup de grâce of a game of "knights and sorcerers." This, at any rate, was the story being circulated by her old schoolmate Jessie Foulon—a troubled girl who had claimed, from the beginning, to know the secrets of the *affaire du cimetière*. By the fall of 1995, encouraged by her parents and perhaps by their lawyer—a Front National councilman named Guy Macary—Jessie had told that story at the tribunal, and the result was that four of Carpentras's golden youth, Olivier Andrieu among them, were put under investigation. It was "the people" against the privileged, or, you could say, Le Pen against the conspiracy. (Jean-François, calling to say hello, said that to believe in conspiracies that work is "to take an optimistic view of human nature.")

Sylvie Mottes had survived for years with André Chapon telling her to arrest someone or close the case, but by the fall of 1995 Chapon had been suspended from his tribunal (where, as it turned out, his concierge had been running a lively traffic in guns, television sets, and bottles of pastis seized by the police in house searches), and a new chief prosecutor was installed at Carpentras's courthouse. His name was Jean-Michel Tissot, and he came with a reputation almost as controversial as Collard's, having been the prosecutor in the corruption trial of Jacques Médecin—the mayor of Nice and a man whose adventures in crime were so public and so predictably entertaining that people followed them, week by week, like episodes of "The Sopranos." Médecin had loathsome political views, but a lot of Frenchmen harbored a soft spot for him, and rumor had it that Tissot was one of those Frenchmen. He arrived in Carpentras—a dead ringer for Belmondo playing the prosecutor in a film noir—famous but under a certain cloud, and with an undeniable appetite for the limelight, and found himself saddled with a prissy *juge d'instruction*, who refused to court, or even talk to, the press. She did, however, have to talk to him. She told him about the latest accusations having to do with a dead girl and drugs and orgies and, of course, with Félix Germon, and she said that she took them seriously enough to pursue—which was, after all, her job.

Less than a week later, several million Frenchmen turned on a popular Monday-night television tabloid called "Témoin no. 1" and—after hearing from Magdeleine about all the important Carpentrasians being protected by a compliant tribunal—listened to the host quote from a phone call to Prosecutor Tissot. "On the contrary," Tissot had told him, "we're moving toward some indictments within the next few weeks." Sylvie Mottes was horrified; she refused to confirm the news; she refused to deny it; she refused to say anything at all. "I couldn't respond to the provocation, I couldn't react, because the law forbids it," she said later. Perhaps she already suspected that the story that had made its way from one deluded girl to the tribunal had at least as much to do with Carpentras's own feuds and disappointments and resentments as it did with Félix Germon—that maybe it had to do with Jessie Foulon's parents' "petting zoo" failing, and the *mairie* refusing their application for assistance; or with Jessie's older sister liking the owner of a Carpentras pizzeria, whose son happened to hang out with the Mayor's son, more than he liked her; or even with Jessie herself being a kind of small-town Lillian Hellman, with a history of putting herself at the center of other people's stories. Those stories got more and more extravagant, but so did the pressure on Mme. Mottes. In February of 1996, the Mayor's son and his three friends were seized by the police and brought in handcuffs to the Avignon police station for a "confrontation" with Jessie Foulon. Jessie settled the matter herself, backing down a few minutes before a confrontation could even start—Tissot told me she punched out a window and cut her wrist—and that, for the police, was the end of the golden-youth theory.

It was also the end of Mme. Mottes.

In April, she was removed from the case of Félix Germon, and her three-thousand-page file was transferred to a *juge d'instruction* at the Marseilles tribunal, whose knowledge of the affair consisted mainly of what she had seen on television and read in the paper. By summer, Mottes and her husband had moved to postings in Angers, leaving Carpentras to its war of grievances. Gilbert Collard was suing the Mayor. The Mayor's son and the tombstone maker's son were suing Jessie (who was finally brought to trial late last month, convicted of "false testimony," given a year's suspended sentence, and ordered to pay a franc in damages). Some of the Jewish families whose headstones had been damaged were talking about suing the city. The only person not suing somebody else was Jean-Michel Tissot, who made up for it two years later by filing defamation suits against *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the television station Arté, and a journalist who was writing a book on the affair and had blasted Tissot on an Arté documentary.

On July 30, 1996, a twenty-six-year-old skinhead named Yannick Garnier walked into the Avignon office of Renseignements Généraux and asked for an agent he knew, by name, as the father-in-law of an old school friend. The agent was out. The skinhead waited. After a couple of hours, he said that, well, anyone would do—and that was when the mystery of the cemetery was solved. The truth was so obvious, after all the fantasies, that it came almost as an anticlimax: Five skinheads from the area, two of them briefly attached to the Parti Nationaliste Français et Européen, had ended up together in Avignon, and on the night of May 8, 1990, they had desecrated Carpentras's Jewish cemetery in homage either to Hitler's birthday or to the anniversary of his death. (They weren't sure, and, in the event, the date was wrong for both.) The leader of the five, a high-school janitor named Jean-Claude Gos, was already well known to the local police, who, in fact, put him in prison two years later for beating up a North African. Gos had died in a motorcycle crash in 1993, but the others were still around, and Garnier named them. When the police asked what had prompted him to confess so suddenly, six years after the desecration, he talked wistfully about being down on his luck—he was an Avignon rock-club bouncer, out of a job. It was a situation he interpreted as "remorse." He said he had been angry at his life and thought that maybe confessing would make him feel better.

By the next morning, the other three skinheads had been arrested. Two of them were men Garnier had known since high school: Bertrand Nouveau, a dim-witted character who had just finished a stint in the Navy and was working at a store in the Avignon suburbs; and Olivier Fimbry, an admirer of the Third Reich and its "discipline," who had left the Vaucluse and was found in the north, in Colmar, where he was enjoying a career as an infantry sergeant in the French Army. The last of the group was Patrick Laonegro, who managed a snack bar near Perpignan and was, by Garnier's account, "our intellectual" and "our historian," meaning that, along with a fondness for heavy metal and an old membership card from the P.N.F.E., he had a bust of Wagner on his mantel, a collection of Waffen S.S. memorabilia, and a dog-eared copy of "Mein Kampf," which he could quote from memory. It was Laonegro who had introduced the rest of the group to Jean-Claude Gos, and Gos, apparently, who had planned the desecration—casing the Carpentras cemetery for at least a year, driving Laonegro and Fimbry out from Avignon to see it, and, finally, in April of 1990, scaling the wall with Fimbry for a look inside. They came upon two fresh graves that night, one of them Félix's, and according to Fimbry that was when Gos had the idea of exhuming a corpse and leaving it, exposed, as a kind of signature to their "action." Gos told Garnier and Nouveau, who were enthusiastic but not necessarily that enthusiastic, that it would be their initiation as warriors in the Aryan cause. He thought of the desecration as a "military operation," an incursion into enemy territory. He planned everything, down to the last detail. He saw to it that, on May 8th, his men came to the cemetery "prepared." Two cars. Gloves. Masks. Sneakers (except for Garnier, who wouldn't be parted from his Doc Martens). Tools they had bought. A few tools "borrowed" from the cemetery gardener's shed and afterward left behind. The only time discipline broke down that night was when Gos himself broke down. Gos—who was by all accounts enraged by the presence of so many Jews, even if they were dead Jews—grabbed a shovel and tried to knock off Félix Germon's head. Failing that, he took the pole from the shed and tried to impale Félix. The getaway, according to Garnier, went well.

None of the skinheads were known to have any connections in Carpentras. None were known to have any connections with the Front National (though they certainly shared its prejudices). But

"My dad's a recovering role model, too."

there was a connection with the investigation. At the time of the desecration, Laonegro and Gos were under surveillance by the Avignon police—Gos because of his record and Laonegro because of the circles they both frequented—and within a few days they were hauled into the commissariat and held for questioning. They produced alibis. They were released. And, for a time, they were put back under surveillance. But when Garnier finally confessed, in 1996, it turned out that the policemen doing the questioning that frantic first week at the Avignon commissariat had, incredibly, neglected to ask the skinheads what they were doing on the night of May 8, 1990—only on the next night, the night before Thérèse Grosajt discovered the desecration. The error went unnoticed, even during Gos's 1993 trial.

Yannick Garnier's confession produced a couple of days of headlines. The Socialists said, "You see, it wasn't us." The Front National said, less convincingly, "What have these terrible people got to do with us?" The golden youth said, "They're not even from here!" A few television pundits talked about "the fallibility of the human factor" and how one small oversight could leave a town like Carpentras with wounds that were going to take a generation to heal. But no one was really interested in Carpentras anymore. Not in Magdeleine Germon, who was mugged in her apartment that September and went to the hospital for a week and wondered why no important politicians came to visit. Not even in the astonishing news (a reporter at *Le Monde* broke this story) that the man whose car had hit Jean-Claude Gos's Yamaha on the Route Nationale 7 in 1993 had been found dead at the bottom of the Rhône two years later, the victim, it was said, of a drug-trade murder, with two bullet holes in his chest and his feet encased in a hundred and fifty pounds of cement. Nothing disturbed the satisfaction of the French in knowing that Carpentras, solved, was no longer their affair.

The trial that took place in the Marseilles tribunal, in March of 1997, was perfunctory. It lasted four days, which was appropriate to a simple *délit*—a misdemeanor—carrying a sentence of at most two years. (The young Moroccan who mugged Magdeleine got five.) No one from Carpentras attended the trial besides Magdeleine and a handful of local lawyers—I was surprised to find Guy Macary among them—who were representing the claims of some of the families with damaged tombs. It was almost as if the town were disappointed that, after so much heady, satisfying speculation, the affair hadn't really been *about* Carpentras. There were the usual psychologists' reports about bad mothers, alcoholic and abusive fathers, homosexual tendencies, communication problems, inferiority complexes, deep frustrations, and longings to "belong." No one asked the skinheads the sort of questions that would reflect badly on France, or even on Carpentras, except, perhaps, Magdeleine, who looked at the defendants on the last day of their trial, and cried, loudly enough for everyone in the courtroom to hear, "Why did you do this?"

PLEASE GIVE WHAT YOU CAN
P.C.VEY

"Apparently, it's his severance package."

It was raining when I went back to Carpentras last spring. The road in from the Avignon airport was under repair, and I lost my way on so many detours that, by the time I arrived, it felt almost like coming home. People were used to me now. I had learned, over the years, to avoid the unfriendliest ones, like the old *marquis* from my second visit, who was so uneasy at the thought of strangers wandering through his beautiful house that when I asked to use the bathroom he showed me to a hole in a plank of wood in an unlit basement. The town and I were learning to get along. The waiter at Le Rich-Bar put extra ham on my sandwich. The woman at the Pâtisserie Jouvaud told me the best tarts to bring to the Bruns for dinner. Even the Mayor seemed glad to see me. He'd won a Légion d'Honneur and another term at the *mairie;* he'd even been awarded damages in Gilbert Collard's failed lawsuit. He wanted me to know that one of the skinheads (he didn't remember which one) was so sorry about the *affaire du cimetière* that he was sending a few hundred francs (he didn't remember how many) to Carpentras every month, as reparations. But he also wanted me to know that "only five people, three of them journalists," had shown up for the funeral when Magdeleine Germon died, a year earlier. "We try to turn the page, but we lived with those rumors, and we'll never forget them," he said, when I asked him why.

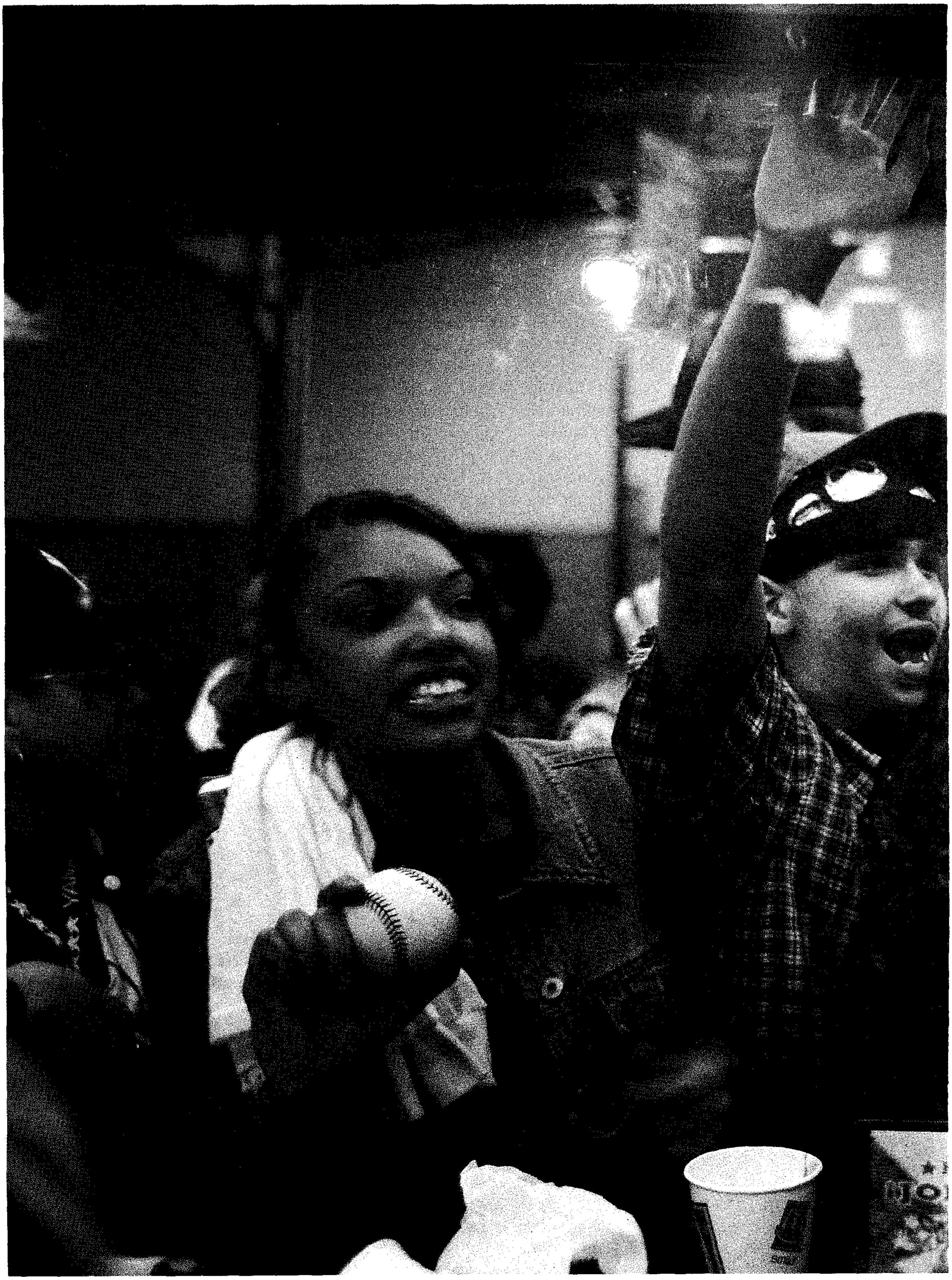
It wasn't just Magdeleine. So many of the people touched by the affair were gone. Sylvie Mottes and André Chapon and Roland Magnet. Fréddy Haddad was starting over again in a village near Montpellier. (An accountant from Orange was looking after the Community now; no one local had volunteered.) The Foulons had left, disgraced, and were said to be starting a new petting zoo, someplace where no one from Carpentras could find them. Even the Mayor's son had left for Paris, and was working as a travelling salesman. There wasn't much, besides bad memories, to keep him home. "The young don't see each other anymore—they avoid each other," Jean-François's son Philippe told me. Mustafa had taken a job at a Club Med in St. Moritz. Hubert had become a journalist and was living near Marseilles, reporting news spots for a local television station. A few days into my visit, he reluctantly drove up to see me, transformed by a button-down shirt, horn-rim glasses, and a neat crewcut, and we talked about how all their lives had been "marked" by the *affaire du cimetière*. He was still bitter; he said he'd never forget his day at the Avignon police station, or the sound of "my buddy Mustafa crying in the next room." In fact, he sounded pretty much like the Mayor had. "What happened to me here?" Hubert said. "I saw the looks. I heard the rumors. I am not a fan of Carpentras."

It seemed to me that just as I was beginning to like Carpentras the Carpentrasians were saying I was wrong. None of the rumors had stopped. People were still talking about plots and conspiracies and *coups montés*. I remembered Jean-François telling me once that the town was caught in "a macabre comedy, with Mme. Germon playing Antigone and the sun of Provence adding to the irreality." Magdeleine was dead now, and the case officially closed, but the comedy still went on. A local reporter named Annick Bassotti—the one reporter I had met who seemed to have followed the affair with any real understanding—said that the town, with its rumors and its petty, revealing hatreds, was starting to remind her of a black swamp. "You're trapped in it, glued in it, like a bird," she told me. "You can't manage to beat your wings." And Jean-Michel Tissot, over at the tribunal, looked at me, startled, when I asked if he had bought a house in Carpentras and said, emphatically, "No." Tissot has been posted as far from the *métropole* as Cayenne and La Réunion, but he still found Carpentras "a strange, complicated town." "The people here function by sympathy or antipathy," he told me. "Not by reality. They don't assimilate 'reality.' " He said that if you had listened to all the rumors circulating in Carpentras when he got there you would have believed that Magdeleine Germon had been the mistress of Kees van Dongen and Fernandel. He had read Jessie Foulon's testimony about the golden youth and believed it—or wanted to believe it—and look what happened. He told me his side of the story. "It's a book," he said. "No, it's a movie."

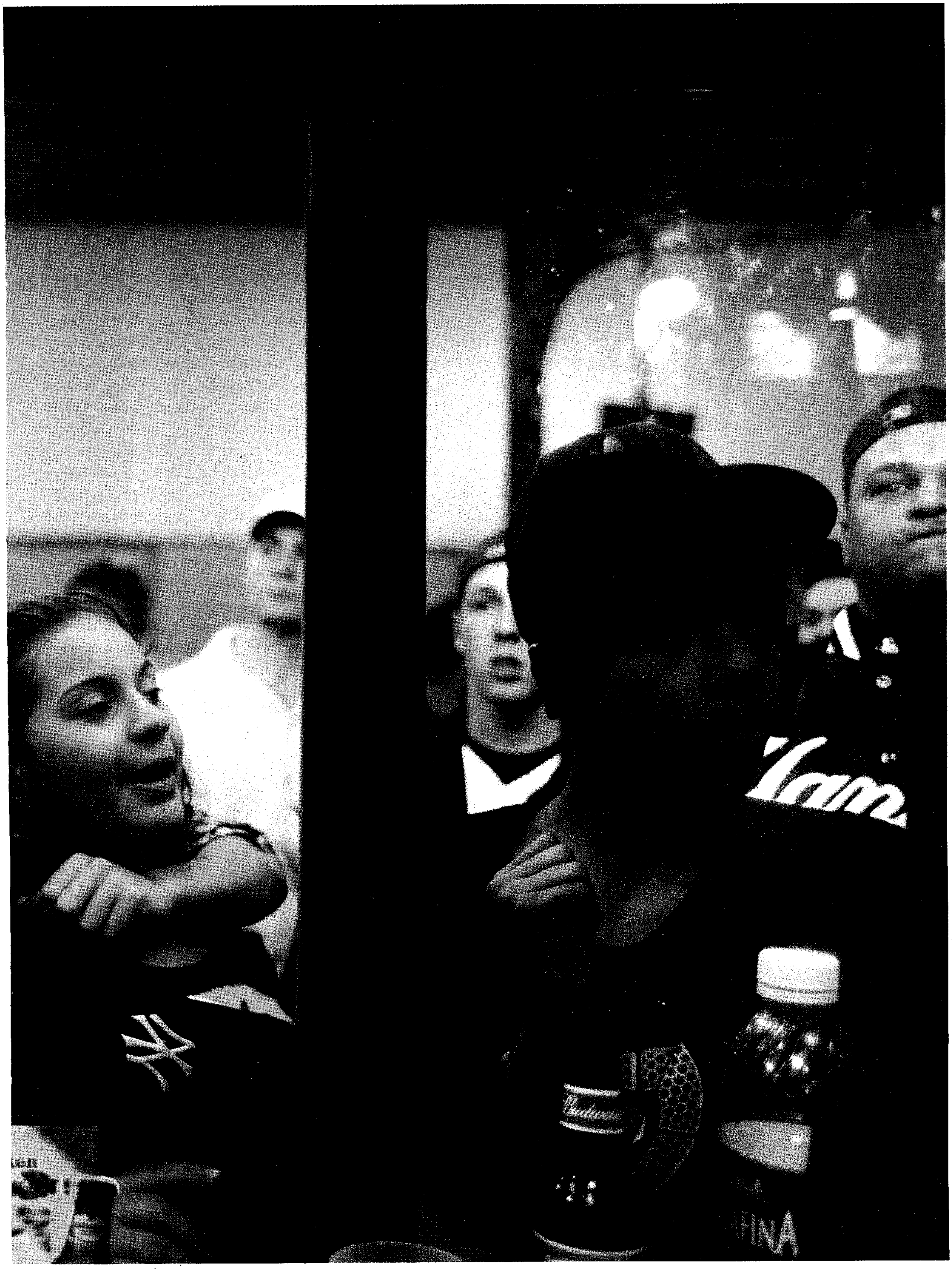
By now, and maybe because we are friends, the Bruns are a little weary of my obsession with Carpentras—of the same questions and conversations, of the same neighbors shaking their heads and saying, "Ah, so the American's here again, staying with Martine and Jean-François." Jean-François isn't in politics anymore. He didn't run in the last Carpentras elections. What interests him now are the archives he's putting together for the city on the history of sports in the Vaucluse, and the research he's doing on rugby, as part of a team of French ethnographers looking at the country's sports. He thinks that rugby, in France, is doing the job that politics should do: persuading people to get along. We agreed, without really saying it, that the last afternoon of my visit would also be our last afternoon devoted to the *affaire du cimetière*.

Jean-François came home from the office early, and so did Martine. She had caught a spring cold, but she wandered in and out of the library, swathed in a big scarf, bringing coffee and sometimes joining us at the long curved table where Jean-François had spread the last few years of Carpentras clippings. The neighbor's dog came for a visit. Two of the Brun children, travelling on their spring break, called with instructions on how to fix the VCR. It seemed so normal, sitting around with good friends in a warm house on a gray day—too normal, almost, for the conversation. The affair was over, but there were still so many unanswered questions. People called Carpentras a symbol, but what was it a symbol of? Ten years ago, the violation of a dead Jew's body had seemed like an echo of a hate-filled past. Today, after the slaughter in Yugoslavia, it seemed almost prophetically incidental. There were ten thousand skinheads active in Germany now. Jörg Haider's Freedom Party was in the Austrian Cabinet. The Front National was by now only one of four radical right-wing parties with seats in the European Parliament. And France itself had more than thirty mayors, including the mayors of Orange and Toulon, who had been elected on Front National tickets or as members of the Party running as independents—not to mention a mayor in Nice who had prudently left the Party only nine months before the country's fifth-largest city elected *him*. Guy Macary had said that morning that the Front's share of the Carpentras vote had gone from fourteen to twenty-four per cent in the aftermath of the *affaire du cimetière*, but statistics like that no longer surprised me. A year and a half earlier, the desecration of seventy-one Jewish graves in Metz had barely made the papers, and in Orléans there were still people who would swear to you that a group of local Jewish merchants had kidnapped Christian women and sold them into white slavery. The problem wasn't Carpentras. What was interesting about Carpentras wasn't that it was different—only a little more closed, a little more malicious, than some places. You could have asked the same questions of a thousand towns, given the same circumstances, that I had been asking in Carpentras all these years: What was wrong with Carpentras? How could anyone in Carpentras think that the worst thing that had happened to Félix Germon was that he'd made Carpentras look bad?

"The truth of the affair was so banal," Jean-François said at one point toward the end of the afternoon. "The explanation, when it came, fit the stereotype of a racist crime so well that, naturally, some people assumed it wasn't true. Then there were the people—many more people—who didn't want it to be true, because the rumors were so useful politically. It would have been different if we'd caught the vandals six days later. But six years later! Six years, and even the most ordinary imbeciles become grandiose. The Carpentrasians who refused to participate in this awful game, the ones who ignored the rumors—we recognized each other. There was a sort of reinforcement in that. There's a saying in France: '*C'est au pied du mur qu'on voit le maçon.*' " You can tell the mason by the way he built the wall. "And that's what we did. We looked at the wall—at the facts of the affair—and we knew who did it, the kind of person who did it. Those of us who were rational, who *stayed* rational—we take a certain pride in our comportment now." ♦



NEW YORK SCENE BY GILLES PERESS *Yankee fans on River Avenue in the Bronx, across from Yankee Stadium, watchi*



Game Two of the World Series through the windows of Stan's Sports Bar. The Mets' rally fell short, and the Bronx team won.

FICTION

BEULAH BERLIN, AN A-Z

BY WILLIAM BOYD

Angst, ennui, weltschmerz, cafard, taedium vitae, anomie. . . . Curious how oddly beguiling these words are. I almost don't mind suffering from the conditions they describe. Some of the so-called "beautiful diseases," perhaps. But I exaggerate: I realized I was in trouble only when I went to Berlin.

Berlin gave me my name and was the making of me. Before Berlin, everything was conventionally straightforward: I was born; I became a child; I went to school, then college (media studies), then film school. My life was not particularly interesting. In film school, I wanted to be an editor (it was the idea of control), but changed my mind after a year and decided to become an art director. (I was good at drawing.) How do you know when your life is intrinsically uninteresting? You just do. Some people live quietly, unhappily, with this knowledge; others do something about it.

At a film festival in Hamburg, where a short film I had art-directed was being screened, I met my first husband, Georg. He was an artist and, after the festival, I spontaneously decided to follow him to Berlin. I was twenty-two years old; I knew that this would be the beginning of everything. We were married a month later.

A man has just walked by, leading a Great Dane and a dachshund. How peculiar. (I am writing this in Amsterdam.)

Georg and his friends staged an exhibition called "Stunk" (it should be pronounced with a German "s"). They rented a floor of an office building for a month on the Somethingstrasse and it became their art gallery. (*Stunk=Kunst.*) Georg asked me to contribute, and that was how "The Transparent Wardrobe" (and Beulah Berlin) came into being. After being Beulah McTurk for twenty-two years, I knew that Beulah Berlin was bound to be more intriguing, altogether cooler.

Color dominated my wardrobe in those days. I wore the brightest clothes—as camouflage. (Now I wear only black, white, and gray.) At the "Stunk" show, I hung my garish clothes on chrome rails and wore nothing but a black brassiere and panties. People then selected a combination of items from my wardrobe, wrote the request on a piece of paper, and for the next hour I wore whatever they had suggested. A black stiletto and a brown hiking boot; a leather jacket and a bikini bottom; a straw sombrero and pajama trousers; a tartan shawl and fishnet tights. I took a Polaroid photograph of each combination and pinned it on a giant pinboard. I have to say that without Beulah Berlin and her transparent wardrobe the "Stunk" show would be completely forgotten. Ninety-nine per cent of the press coverage was about me. By the time the lease ran out, I had over a thousand photographs: the pinboard was a multicolored collage of various Beulah Berlins. Georg never really forgave me, I now see in retrospect, and from then on our relationship went steadily to the dogs.

Dogs are wonderful animals, and it's a source of endless regret to me that I've never been able to have one as a pet—because of my allergies. Who was it who said, "The more I see of man the more I love my dog"? Matthew Arnold? Nietzsche? Somebody. Certainly dogs are higher in my estimation than my ex-husbands. Well, my first and second exes, definitely, not necessarily my soon-to-be third ex.

"Exudations" was the name of Georg's next show. (We were still married, just.) If "Stunk" made me famous, "Exudations" made me notorious. Georg's plan was to remain inside our apartment for a year and collect and preserve everything his body exuded. Everything, yes. For instance, he strained his shaving water through muslin to recover the bristles. I don't need to go into the details. These "exudations," bottled and boxed, sealed and carefully labelled, would then form the basis of a touring exhibition, the idea being that they provided an idiosyncratic but perfect record of Georg's body over one year. I lasted three weeks, then fell seriously ill with some gastrobacteriological infection. Georg refused to leave the flat—his work was still in progress, he argued, and, moreover, he was in perfect health—and eventually the police had to break the doors down. (Also, the neighbors were complaining.) Disinfection and fumigation followed, and "Exudations" was no more than a brief footnote in the history of contemporary German art. Our marriage didn't survive. Georg went to live in a shack in Ibiza. I haven't seen him since. I now realize that Georg was an accident waiting to happen, a faulty missile they forgot to test-fire.

"Fire one!" Cornelius exclaims each time he has his orgasm. Cornelius is my secret boyfriend—my U-boat captain. I used to think this was funny, but it's beginning to irritate me. (Otto knows nothing about Cornelius.) Cornelius's flat is very cold and I'm always complaining. I grew up with heat, I tell him. I'm used to being warm.

Cornelius: "You lived in the tropics? Colonial girl, eh? Where—Africa? India?"

Me: "No. England, Eastbourne."

My father's business was the sale and installation of gas and electric fires. We had no central heating in our house, and electric fires burned everywhere, three or four to a room, their orange bars glowing in their caged chrome chambers. Even in summer we sweltered in that dry, unforgiving heat. What's the point of being in the electric-fire business, my father argued, if you can't keep yourself nice and warm?

When he became ill, I blamed it on this obsession with electric warmth, and after he and my mother divorced (she couldn't stand the heat anymore) I urged

SARAH MOON

him to start a new career and move away. But he stayed in Eastbourne, and his fires continued to burn.

A very English stubbornness, Cornelius says, highly amused. Perhaps he's right, I now think, perhaps it is the place's fault—England's.

Glands, my father would claim, were the real cause of the lassitude and weight loss that would later afflict him. He was in no pain, but it was clear something was profoundly wrong with him. He started taking all manner of self-prescribed vitamin-and-health-food combinations to battle his "gland" problem. Ginseng and cod-liver oil. Nettle tea and royal jelly. Huge amounts of vitamin E and strange seaweed stews. He munched sunflower seeds all day. Nothing worked.

I took the urn with my father's ashes across the channel to France and scattered them on the battlefields of the Somme. I thought he would appreciate being abroad, away from Eastbourne. I wandered about the meadows—it was summer—taking a pinch of ash from time to time and allowing it to fall from my fingers and be carried away by the breeze. The air was full of the scent of freshly cut hay.

Hay fever suggests summer. Mowers in the thickening meadows and the pollens taking to the air as the grasses fall to the advancing scythe. Not in my case: for me, hay fever is a spring phenomenon. T. S. Eliot knew what he was talking about. All that "April is the cruellest month" stuff; he was clearly an early-season, pollen-allergies sufferer. But now my allergies are with me all year long. Every month is April. I open a newspaper, and my nose begins to run; a woman passes me, and her perfume causes my throat to contract. (Why do these women douse themselves in so much scent? Why this love of chemical odors?) At night, I lie in bed and my hip bones ache as if I had arthritis. I'm not alone, I know; we're all becoming slowly poisoned, oversensitized. We are all, in our own ways, ill.

Illness casts such a bright light that the rest of life retreats into the shadows beyond its refulgent glare. When my father was ill, no matter where I was, or what I was doing, I seemed to think about him a dozen times an hour. Eventually, there was nothing for it, and I moved back to Eastbourne, to a bed-and-breakfast in the same street. He never went to hospital; district nurses used to visit him throughout the day, while I provided him with increasingly deliquescent, then entirely liquid, meals. Soon all he wanted was beef consommé. "Ah," he would say, as I brought him the steaming bowl, "soup du jour."

Journal keeping has sustained me since I was twelve. Over the last few years, however, I've refined the process. When I wake, I write down the first thing that occurs to me, and before I go to bed I write down the last thing. You should try it: it is astonishingly meaningful. Those two sentences define and plot your life in the most random yet illuminating way. I look back to April 14, 1999. Morning: "Gianluca is a pure, unreconstructed bastard." Night: "Put out rubbish." November 22, 1996. Morning: "Wintry sunlight makes my room look dirty." Night: "Edith Wharton is good but boring, must resist the temptation to skip."

Kipling wrote a book called "Stalky & Co." In it there is a character called M'Turk, which I suppose is a form of McTurk (though I hadn't seen the apostrophe before). It is the only McTurk I've found in literature.

My own name, Beulah, comes out of a book, a book that my mother was reading before I was born. "The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe," by William Alexander Caruthers, set in the antebellum Deep South. My mother was on a Deep South craze at the time. I suppose it took her away from Eastbourne and my father's shop of fire. "The Land of Beulah," she used to sigh, and thus I was named. But Beulah McTurk is all wrong. It suggests to me a plump and heavy woman, whereas I am tall and very, very slim. Consequently, I was happy to become Beulah Berlin, to be named after a city. It suggests something steely, tougher, as if I had surrounded myself with a protective force field, a nonstick coat of shellac, say, or Teflon.

London: too weird and wired, these days. New York: too busy. San Francisco: too healthy. Paris: too self-conscious. All these cities I have known well, or as well as any one person can know a city. There are times in your life, though, when relaxation is what you crave, and I had to leave London, felt the panicked urge to flee. So where else would I go but Amsterdam? It drew me as a candle flame draws a moth.

Mother disapproved of my name change. She also disapproved of my life as an artist, of Georg, my first husband, and of Otto, my third. I never told her about my second. But I have a feeling she would like Cornelius, my secret boyfriend: he is handsome, selfish, and raffish, like a beau in a Caruthers novel.

Otto, my third husband, is English despite his Germanic Christian name. He's called Otto Carlyle, and he repairs computers. He declines to use common terms of endearment like "darling" and "sweetheart" and calls me instead things like "my pragmatic monad" or "my ambrosial liquor." I rise to the challenge. When he leaves on his trips or when we speak on the phone, we sign off like this.

Otto: "Goodbye, my fish-and-chips."

Me: "Goodbye, bird with coppery, keen claws."

Otto: "All love to the slender gymnast."

Me: "See you soon, windmill of my mind."

Otto is very tall, and after my father's death I wanted, for some vague reason, to be with a tall man. Otto is six feet four; I am five feet nine.

Nineteen sixty-nine. The year of my birth. March 27, 1969. That week, the first Concorde was undergoing its test flights. John Lennon and Yoko Ono were doing their bed-in for peace at the Amsterdam Hilton. I am a child of the sixties, and it seems to me only apt that I should now be back in Amsterdam. Full circle, after a fashion. A near-perfect O.

Otto has just called from Dakar. Whenever he's abroad and he calls, I place a photograph of him in front of me. It was taken at a beach café in Antibes when we were staying with my then gallerist Clive Count (the "o" is silent, I used to say later, after he dropped me). Otto is wearing surfing trunks and a baggy T-shirt, his hair is wet and sticks up in spikes—he looks like an impossibly lanky waif. I've come to hate the disembodied voice you hear on a telephone, but it's never so bad when you're looking at a photo.

Photography is the art form I now practice. After I stopped touring with the Transparent Wardrobe, I began photographing people's feet.

Of all our body parts, the foot is the one we treat the most harshly. Not even our faces show with such brutal candor how we age. Our feet get stuffed into unsuitable shoes, are walked upon for miles, and then are scarcely ministered to (occasionally cutting toenails, occasionally painting said toenails). Year on year, the calluses, corns, chilblains, and verrucae—steady deformations—alter our feet in the most visible way. I have twenty-five subjects (young and old), and every six months I photograph their faces and their feet, juxtaposed. Already two have dropped out; the experience is too distressing, they say, as if the ticking clock of their own mortality is manifest there, at the end of their legs, hidden in their shoes. Perhaps you saw my exhibition in Ghent, or Basel, or the one in East Gallery East, in London? Some people's feet look like vegetable growths, others like eroded landscapes. The exhibitions were a great success. Every morning, before the doors opened, there would be a substantial queue.

Qwertyuiop, that's what I'm going to call my child, male or female, whenever I have him or her. He or she can then make any name they want out of that combination of letters. Trey. Opi. Yute. Power. I'm not sure, however, whether I want Otto to be the father. I told him it was all over between us, but he has followed me to Amsterdam and, somehow, is living in this flat I have rented on the Kaizersgracht. He says that Schiphol airport is the perfect hub for his business. (The computers he fixes are huge: airports, hospitals, government departments, often abroad; he was even hired by the Pentagon for two months.) During the hours he spends in the air, he writes. He's begun a novel, but all I know is that it's called "Garden Airplane Trap" (after the painting by Max Ernst; I think Ernst has the best titles in modern art). Otto's often away doing his mysterious job, and, even though that's when I see Cornelius, I find I miss Otto. Then, when he returns, I resent him. I want his presence and also his absence. When he's not at work, he spends most of his time writing his novel and reading.

Reading is my great solace. Some years ago, faced by the millions of books, I decided to make my reading systematic. So every year I choose a theme and read only the books that fall into the specific category. For example, in 1995 I read only books whose titles were women's names. ("Emma," "Madame Bovary," "Thérèse Raquin," "Esther Waters," "Diana of the Crossways," "The History of Miss Betty Thoughtless.") In 1998, I moved on to animals. I read "Kangaroo," "Birdy," "The Sandpiper," "The White Monkey," "The Doves' Nest," "Travels with a Donkey." This year I'm on cities: "Goodbye to Berlin," "London Fields," "L.A. Confidential," "Last Exit to Brooklyn," "Is Paris Burning?" "The Viceroy of Ouidah." Next year, it'll be abstract nouns. (I have "Persuasion" and "Chaos" lined up ready to go on January 1st.) More and more, I find I like this way of giving your random, haphazard progress through time some sort of hidden organizing factor, known only to you, understood only by you, a personal encryption. It looks normal—somebody reading a book—but underneath, you alone know the significance. Your life's private palimpsest.

Sestina, villanelle, sonnet. My favorite poetic forms in order of preference. Again, it must be because I like a shape in things, a rule. I recently read a poem about tins washed up on a beach, and the next weekend I went out to the dunes at Kennemerduinen and collected a dozen or so of these drift tins. (I now imagine a show—the sand-scoured, sun-bleached, wave-washed, storm-tossed tins beside the pristine, brightly colored, supermarket version—the life of tins; their slow death by water.) I like to smoke a cigarette when I read a poem. I don't know why—I don't smoke a lot—but with poetry I just like to.

Tobacco is a strange drug, when you think about it. Alcohol seems more natural—we all have to drink, after all. But drawing smoke into your lungs is not an instinctive process in any way. I like the smell of wood smoke, but if I see a bonfire I don't rush over to it and start inhaling the fumes. My father took up smoking in the last month of his life as an act of simple defiance, he said, a rebuke to his draining vitality. (We would smoke together all evening as I read him poetry.) It was the same character trait that made him refuse to abandon his

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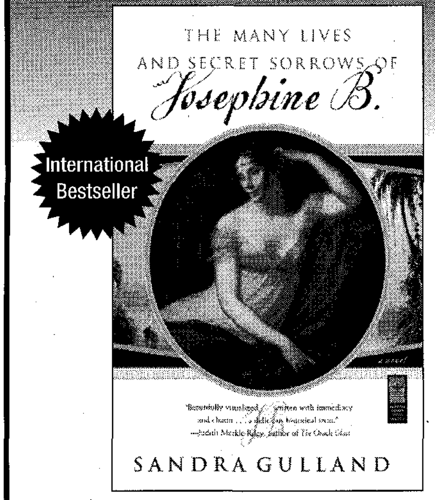
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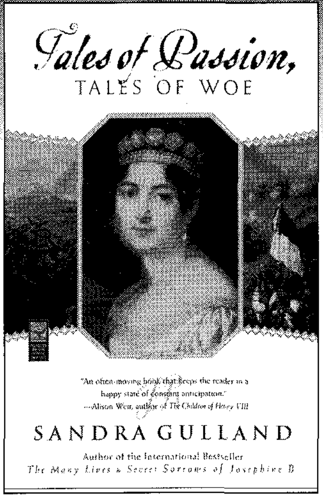
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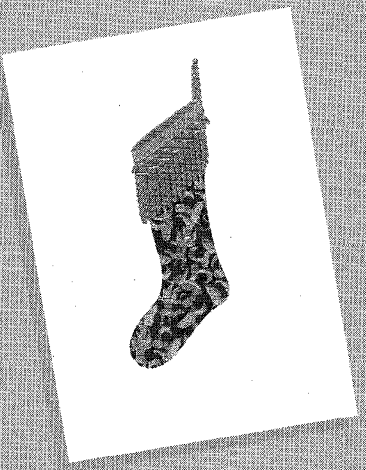

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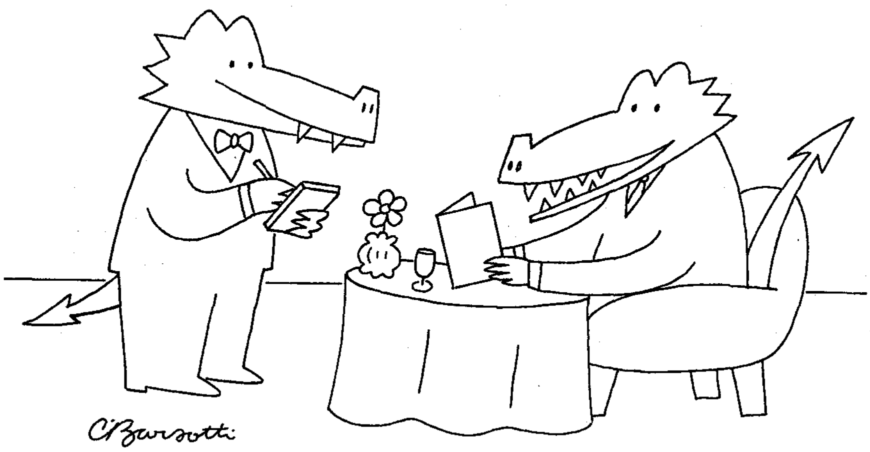
broiling electric fires. I think I understand him better now, see things more from his point of view.

U-turns define life's progress, it seems to me, better than the traditional image of forking paths. How often can the significant events in our life be described as U-turns? Falling out of love, for example. That's a major emotional U-turn; that's no bifurcation on life's highway. This sojourn in Amsterdam is a U-turn. I had to get out of London after my father died. Otto is a U-turn, too. I fell out of love, we were going to split up, and now we're back together. Two U-turns, there. Now I'm turning away from him again, toward Cornelius—it's confusing. Cornelius hoards food, by the way. I found thirty tins of mandarin oranges in a cupboard. He has four kilos of butter in his fridge. A warning sign? Maybe, to use a film image, my life is a series of jump cuts. The continuity is illusory, imprecise, we just jump-cut from one sequence to another. Very nouvelle vague.

Vague ambitions are good, not bad. Life is full of half-thought-out plans for what you might like to do but haven't got the real desire, or the energy, or the time, or the money. And these should be encouraged. I vaguely want to go to Russia. I vaguely want to learn Spanish. I vaguely want to read the novels of Ronald Firbank. I vaguely want to tattoo myself somewhere risqué. Cornelius has a tattoo (a twirly fleur-de-lis) on his coccyx. I cherish these vague ambitions because they seem to presuppose another existence in which they might actually come about. The more vague ambitions you have, the more lives you could lead. I explained all this once at great length to a psychiatrist (just after Georg and I had divorced) who wanted to put me on Valium. He thought I was unwell.

Weltverbesserungswahn. How I love these German words. That's what my psychiatrist (he was German) said was what I suffered from. It must have been the fetid, daily trauma of the "Exudations" period, then my hospitalization, and then Georg's leaving me that made me marry this man, this maniac. On the rebound, in a singularly disastrous way. What was I thinking of? I came to my senses and left him after two weeks and have never mentioned his name again. The single legacy of our relationship is this diagnosis, *Weltverbesserungswahn*: the conviction that the world could be better. My psychiatrist husband said it was a delusion, not a conviction, and that my refusal to acknowledge it as a delusion was proof that I was deluded. You see why I had to go. The only thing that was satisfactory during my two weeks' marriage to this man was the sex.

Xanadu is the name of the bar I work in three nights a week in Jordaan. Cornelius is the manager. He has a small apartment at the top of the building, where we make love when Otto is away. He's just bought a thousand tins of sardines. I asked him if he liked sardines, and he said no, but they were at a bargain price, and you could never tell when your



"I'll start with the knight in shining armor, then have the maiden rare and radiant."

tastes might change. I promised myself I'd stop seeing him as soon as my book is ready (I think my tin idea is a book, now, not a show)—but I think he's in love with me, damn it. What's wrong with these men? I met a publisher last week, here in Amsterdam, and he said almost immediately that, all things being equal—what can he mean? curious expression—he could publish my book next year.

Years go by. I see myself as an old lady living in an apartment block by the sea (not Eastbourne, not Ibiza). I keep the curtains drawn day and night, all year round. Qwertyuiop visits regularly. When he/she arrives, he/she takes his/her shoes and socks off and I photograph his/her feet. He's/she's a good boy/girl, Qwert (is he/she Cornelius's?), and he/she shows concern.

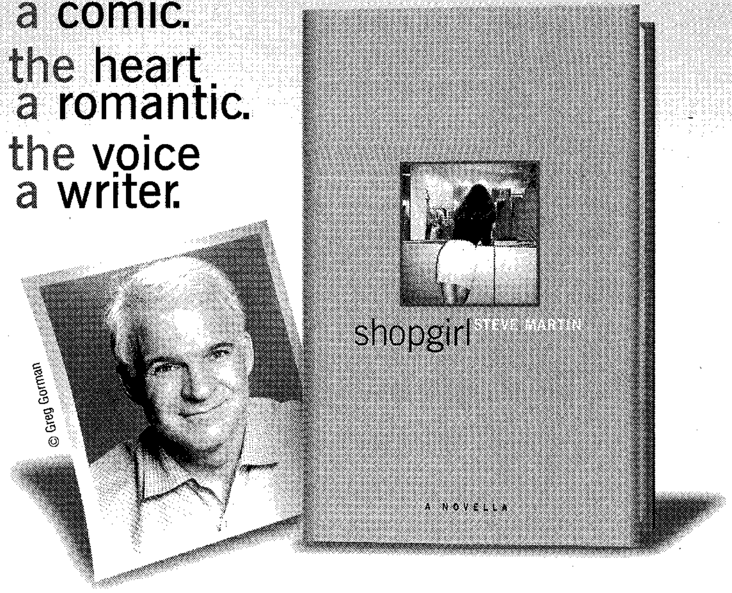
"What's the weather like?" I ask.

"Open the curtains, Mum," he/she says. "See for yourself."

"No," I say, "it's more interesting if you tell me."

And so he/she does his/her best: sunny, scudding clouds, threat of rain later in the day. In my dark apartment, I prefer to use my imagination. I like this fantasy of my future, but what will the reality be? Some old bag living off cigarettes and booze.

Zoos consoled me after my father died. And the zoo in Amsterdam is one of the world's best, so I'm told. I used to watch the chimps, but they depressed me. Too human: sitting around showing off their hard-ons, hurling shit at each other. And the pacing cats were terrifying—to and fro, to and fro—all that charged, energetic resentment at their captivity. So I looked for animals who seemed content with their zoo life, and more and more I found I was watching the rhinos. I came to love their massiveness, their heft, and their effortless charisma. In my worst moments (when Cornelius begged me to leave Otto and live with him; when Otto asked me to come on his next trip—to California) I longed to be a rhino with my rhino armor. And so I would calm myself, watching them, imagining I was a rhino in a zoo, my day an ordered round of eating, defecating and sleeping. In a zoo, but free somehow. Free from the world and its noisy demands. Free, finally, from angst. ♦



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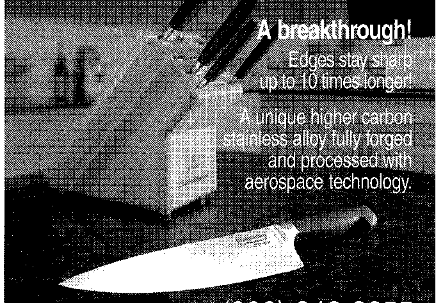

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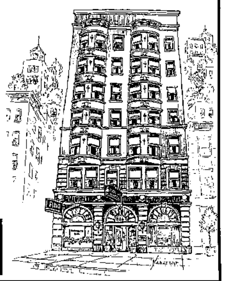

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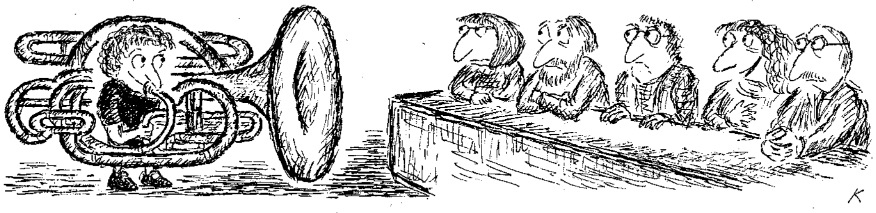

A CRITIC AT LARGE

PRINCE IGOR

Reëxamining Stravinsky’s reign.

BY ALEX ROSS

Was there ever an artist as majestically hip as Igor Stravinsky? From the first night of “The Rite of Spring,” in 1913, until the day of his death, in 1971, he was the one modern composer whom the world could not afford to ignore. As pop stars pushed European masters off the musical stage, Stravinsky held on to the headiest kind of fame. Among his friends were T. S. Eliot, Picasso, and Charlie Chaplin; among his collaborators were Nijinsky, Balanchine, Cocteau, Gide, and Auden. He had an affair with Coco Chanel, gave autographs to Sinatra and the Pope, and met the Kennedys. (“Nice kids,” he said.) In Paris, between the wars, he was the chief couturier of modern music, bewildering imitators with the fluctuations of his taste. Later, in California, he monitored highbrow and lowbrow trends through tortoiseshell sunglasses. He had thoughts about Black Power, declined Aldous Huxley’s LSD, saw “The Graduate” twice. He lived near the Sunset Strip, and on several occasions his limousine was surrounded by teen-age Jim Morrison fans, who peered through the windows, hoping for a glimpse of the Lizard King. They saw, instead, a profoundly amused old Russian gentleman.

Forget it, kids: the “Rite” is not to be outdone. You can buy amplifiers the size of minivans, you can scream obscenities all night into a microphone, but you will not match the psychic shiver that ripples out of a full symphony orchestra as it plays the two hundred stomping chords in the second section of the piece. Stravinsky first sketched that passage, “Augurs of Spring,” in the summer of 1911, in the Polish-Russian countryside, and finished it in a rented room in the Swiss village of Clarens. His task was to depict a divinatory dance of young males. He hit an E-major chord on the piano with his left hand and an E-flat-major-seventh chord with his right. He kept hitting them—one-two-three-four-one-two-three-four—until the dissonance became hard fact. Then he added accents off the beat—one-*two*-three-four-*one*—and the music picked up a frisky bounce. The “Rite” is often cited as a kind of honorary masterpiece of pop—“I feel like taking all my clothes off / Dancing to ‘The Rite of Spring,’ ” the Pet Shop Boys sang—and with good reason; the syncopation of the adolescent dance is more or less the same as the hambone rhythm that drives rock and roll.

It took a moment for the world’s ears to adjust. A Swiss boy who overheard Stravinsky’s labors on the “Rite” kept shouting up at the window, “That’s wrong!” When Serge Diaghilev got a preview of the “Augurs” music, he was taken aback. “How much longer will it go on like that?” he asked. Stravinsky replied, “To the end, my dear.” At the première, on May 29, 1913, in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, howls of discontent went up from the audience after only a couple of minutes. Although some observers claimed that Nijinsky’s primitivist choreography was the cause of the riot, it couldn’t have been a coincidence that the howling began at the very moment the “Augurs” chords kicked in. The aesthetes who occupied the upper balconies made enthusiastic noise of their own, and the composer Florent Schmitt shouted, “Shut up, you bitches from the Sixteenth!” Later, when audiences were able to listen to the music itself, rather than the propaganda for and against it, they fell in love with its terrible beauty. They liked what it did to them. After a performance of the “Rite” in 1914, the composer was carried from the hall on the shoulders of the crowd.

Stravinsky became the master of the game. Unwilling to repeat himself, he perfected the art of staying perpetually up-to-date. His later works were variously categorized as cubistic, surrealist, objectivist, neoclassical, neo-medieval, jazz age, twelve tone, and postmodern before the fact. Since his death, he has become, if anything, more influential. His hypnotic use of rhythm had a galvanic effect on the American minimalists, especially Steve Reich, and neophyte composers still have life-changing encounters with the “Rite,” the “Symphonies of Wind Instruments,” and the “Symphony of Psalms.” A Stravinsky festival can crop up without any provocation, and the current season is supplying a substantial one. Ensembles at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and elsewhere will play most of the major scores, from “Fireworks,” of 1908, to the “Requiem Canticles,” of 1966.

It would be easy to join in the consensus and declare Stravinsky the greatest composer of modern times. But there is a sense of something unresolved at the heart of this astounding career. The artist’s fear of obsolescence led him into a strange pattern of self-obliteration: to justify what he was doing at one moment, he had to reject what he had been doing before. Like Picasso, and like many pop stars who came later, he was as famous for his periods as for his works. His boldest move was to deny his very origins. Richard Taruskin, in a monumental two-volume study entitled “Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions,” has shown how the composer falsified his Russian past—the foundation of the “Rite”—in order to measure up to the modernist values of purity and abstraction. Stephen Walsh, in “Stravinsky: A Creative Spring,” the first volume of a comprehensive biography, illustrates further how the young artist became

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Stravinsky, photographed by Irving Penn, in 1948: The chief couturier of modern music was driven by a fear of falling behind.

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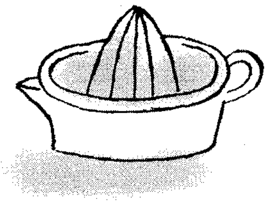
caught up in the twentieth-century theatre of ideas, renouncing nationalism and adopting a cosmopolitan tone. Of the great composers, Stravinsky may have possessed the finest, subtlest mind. But in certain ways his intellect was a limitation, and he left the public with an image of the classical composer as a cerebral rather than a sensuous being.

The idea of "modern music" took shape not in the twentieth century but in the latter part of the nineteenth. For hundreds of years, composers had been artisans who used musical tools: they made things for people to play with, dance to, eat during, pray over. Their minor works, their made-to-order pieces, were, in a way, a measure of their humility. Even the colossal Beethoven stooped to write "Wellington's Victory," a potpourri of anthems which was not intended to outlast the season, much less the millennium. Then came Wagner, the snake in the musical garden. He said to his colleagues, Become your own masters; become gods. Create new sounds, forms, philosophies, religions; the audience will follow. In Nietzsche's wry paraphrase, the Wagnerian composer was "an oracle, a priest—no, more than a priest, a kind of mouthpiece of things-as-they-are, a telephone from the beyond."

Even in Russia, where German culture aroused suspicion, Wagner cast his spell. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, the composer of "Sheherazade" and the teacher of Stravinsky, felt the allure of Wagner's free-floating harmonies and incorporated some of them into his scores. Rimsky was not the only one to find his conceptions challenged. De-luxe productions of Wagner around the turn of the century raised the stakes for music almost impossibly high, and composers were thrown into a creative panic. Now that they had the feeling of belonging to a post-Wagnerian "world of art"—the title of a St. Petersburg journal edited by Diaghilev—they felt the need to stay current. If painters were tending toward abstraction, composers had to find an abstraction of their own. If novelists were incorporating the raw data of daily life, composers, too, should echo the shout in the street.

In 1908, at a time when Stravinsky was still learning his craft, all hell broke loose in Vienna. Arnold Schoenberg, in the course of setting a Stefan George poem that began with the line "I feel the air of another planet," found himself writing music that drifted free of tonality. Nietzsche's joke had come true; composers were making their own laws. The fact that physical scuffles broke out at Schoenberg premières from 1908 onward indicated that the public was having a hard time accepting the new idiom. The radicals did not admit defeat; instead, they changed the definition of success, finding nobility in failure and shame in the triumphs of others. Scandal only added to the atmosphere of derring-do which surrounded modern music in its pioneer years. Like explorers seeking the South Pole, composers moved across barren spaces toward abstract goals: harmonic difficulty, rhythmical complexity, textural density, mathematical consistency. Schoenberg compared himself to Lindbergh, asking why the aviator should be lionized while he, the atonal spaceman, was reviled. The pioneers posted their discoveries year by year. A landmark was reached when Schoenberg's student Alban Berg, in the third of his "Altenberg Songs," combined the twelve notes of the chromatic scale into one mind-altering whole. When that chord was first played, in March of 1913, the audience became unmanageable, and someone called the police.

Igor Stravinsky grew up in surroundings far removed from the hothouse of Vienna. He was born in 1882, the scion of a minor noble family and the son of a famous operatic bass at the Maryinsky Theatre, in St. Petersburg. His musical training, under Rimsky-Korsakov, was steeped in the traditions of the Petersburg Conservatory, which dictated a fusion of Russian folk themes with accepted Germanic forms. Stravinsky's early world view was a blend of fin-de-siècle aestheticism and the occult nationalism of late-tsarist Russia. "The Firebird," his first large score for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, was very much in the Rimsky manner, with its exotic scales, diaphanous orches-



tration, and rapt repetitions of fascinating chords. What set "The Firebird" apart, when it landed on Paris in 1910, was not its style but its confident, even arrogant tone.

The Ballets Russes introduced Stravinsky to some of the most sophisticated personalities of the age. Diaghilev, a sometime composer in his youth, espoused Wagner's synthesis of the arts, but he also knew how to pull in a crowd; he encouraged composers to escape the conservatory ghetto and join in the great fin-de-siècle conversation. The masterpiece of the Ballets Russes aesthetic was "Petrushka," the tale of an animate puppet who performs at a Petersburg street festival. The designer Alexander Benois proposed a "symphony of the street," a "counterpoint of twenty themes," replete with carrousels, concertinas, and sleigh bells. Stravinsky realized Benois's vision of a folk cacophony by letting the music play in two keys at once. This bravura effect was not entirely new; it was suggested in Rimsky's later works, and its signature chord—C major and F-sharp major combined—had already appeared in Strauss's "Elektra." Stravinsky, however, was the one who made bitonality a viable practice. He added a dimension to musical space, letting the ear choose among simultaneous textures.

In contrast to the dark yawps that were coming out of Vienna, this was new music of brightness, irony, and wit. All the lights came on in the Wagnerian room. "Petrushka" would have sufficed as the basis for a major career, but Stravinsky had another surprise in store: he imagined a young girl dancing herself to death, and, in collaboration with the painter Nicholas Roerich, began to plan "The Rite of Spring." He immersed himself in neo-primitive poetry, ethnographic texts, and folk-song collections. Taruskin, in "Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions," shows that the "Rite" is positively infested with folk melodies. Scholars have demolished Stravinsky's later contention that he invented all but one of the tunes from scratch; the "Rite" was designed from the outset as a folkloric tour de force. The fact that theorists of modern music classify it as an abstract study in atonal harmony indicates their ignorance of Russian tradition, and of Rimsky in particular.

The most uncanny aspect of the "Rite" is, paradoxically, the simplicity of its materials. If you listen to it closely—and the unofficial Stravinsky festival this season will give you several chances, with performances by the New York Philharmonic and the Chicago Symphony—you'll find that even the densest textures are a swirl of familiar sounds. Instead of throwing away classical tonality, Stravinsky cut it into a kaleidoscope of fragments. As one scholar observes, the "Rite" actually contains more plain major and minor chords than most works of the previous century. Even though the chords move alongside each other in dissonant phalanxes, you can still pick their faces out of the crowd. The score is also rich in turn-of-the-century atmospherics—not only the usual Rimskyan tricks but also Ravel's pointillistic orchestration, Strauss's trilling flutes and cackling horns, even Wagner's processional rhythms. Puccini needed to make few changes when he echoed the "Rite" in the poignant scene of Liù's death, in "Turandot."

Yet the "Rite" keeps the listener at a distance. Unlike "Petrushka," it does not make for involving theatre. Choreographers have always had trouble with it, because it moves on so many levels at once. Instead of supplying extended sequences, it gives fleeting glimpses of monstrous activities in a virtuoso montage. Throughout, you sense the magician's arranging hand: at many moments of transition, the bass clarinet and the contrabassoon have soft, quick, spooky solos, which are like the asides of a master of ceremonies as the next horror prepares to come onstage. ("And now, ladies and gentlemen," he seems to whisper, "you shall see something the likes of which you have never seen before.") There is a sardonic edge to the singsong tunes that cry out over the orchestral melee. Right before the end, the horns seem to chant, "Nyah-nyah, nyah-nyah." The "Rite" was written when Stravinsky was thirty, but it feels like the work of an adolescent genius—it wears a punkish sneer. A Russian reviewer aptly called it an "icy comedy of primeval hysteria." In that sense, it was modern to the core.

The great work was done, but the young man hesitated. Despite his fantastic powers of invention, he was not a solitary, self-reliant type. Throughout his life, he was led in one direction or another by people who had the air

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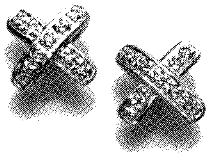

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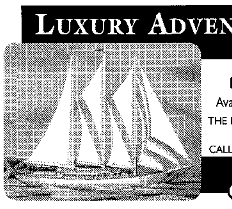

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of being culturally savant. As Walsh observes, Stravinsky at once began to pursue a bon-vivant life style after entering Diaghilev's circle: he liked to go to parties, to be seen, to have his work talked about in a sophisticated way. Flamboyantly heterosexual, he enjoyed the company of gay men, and would later collaborate with Cocteau, Gide, and Auden. It's a pity that Walsh, who resists psychologizing to a fault, doesn't comment on this pattern of professional friendship, or tell us more about the composer's beloved younger brother Gury, who, according to Robert Craft, was also homosexual, and who died in 1917. Perhaps Stravinsky later in life was seeking a substitute for Gury, with whom he survived the coldness of his father's home.

Even before he dropped the bomb of the "Rite," Stravinsky was glancing around to see what other radicals on the scene were doing. In 1912, in Berlin, he heard Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire" and hailed his Austrian colleague as the "truly outstanding artist of our time." The atonal idiom interested him less than the instrumentation, which was for two winds, two strings, and piano. Next to the Wagnerian orchestra of the "Rite," with its eight horns and five bassoons, the "Pierrot" group was like a motorcar speeding alongside a locomotive. Stravinsky echoed Schoenberg in the second and third of his "Three Japanese Lyrics," which were written after the Berlin visit. It's curious to find the composer of so decisive a work as the "Rite" engaging in such mimicry. Later, he spoke dismissively of Schoenberg, and for a time he could not bear to hear his name. But he remained in awe of him on some level, and he kept his "Pierrot" ticket—Row 5, Seat 5—until his death.

If Taruskin is correct, Stravinsky also scrutinized the reviews of the "Rite," both in Paris and back home in Russia. Parisian highbrows were impressed not so much by the wildness of the music as by its clarity, its purity. They praised the hardness of the wind and the brass, the relative insignificance of the strings. Jacques Rivière, the editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, exclaimed over the renunciation of "sauce" and "atmosphere." Meanwhile, in St. Petersburg and Moscow, the remaining members of the Rimsky-Korsakov circle dismissed "Rite" as so much trendy noise. This sequence of responses—celebrity abroad, resentment at home—impelled Stravinsky's turn from Russian nationalism to European modernism. The process was hastened by the First World War and by the Russian Revolution. By 1918, the world of his childhood had been destroyed.

And so Stravinsky reinvented himself as the man from nowhere, the most modish of the moderns. He wrote smaller-scale works in a crisp, objective style, using the bitonal technique of "Petrushka" to rearrange secondhand airs and original clichés. The "Pierrot" ensemble evolved into a bitchy cabaret band, used to best effect in the man-and-Devil fable "Histoire du Soldat." Stravinsky toiled for years on a more ambitious work, a peasant-wedding cantata called "Les Noces," progressively stripping it of the tone color that he had lavished on the "Rite." His early drafts called for a sprawling instrumental ensemble; the final version, of 1923, deployed only percussion and pianos. He even thought of using a pianola, in order to erase every trace of romantic nuance. Taruskin makes the provocative claim that Stravinsky had begun writing the music that was described in Rivière's "Rite" essay, which was not the same as the "Rite" itself. Rivière had praised the reduction of the strings in favor of the winds; by the twenties, we find Stravinsky composing several pieces for winds and nothing but.

"We are always most profoundly influenced by those who praise us," Taruskin writes. This is a harsh view of the creative process, one that fails to explain Stravinsky's less fashionable creations of this period, such as the naggingly strange, cryptically beautiful "Symphonies of Wind Instruments," of 1920. But Taruskin has a point: the majority of Stravinsky's postwar works echoed the giddy, jaded mood of European culture at the time. Ezra Pound said, "Stravinsky is the only living musician from whom I can learn my own job." T. S. Eliot called him "our lion." The young Cocteau was so eager to collaborate that he became an annoyance. The parties after Stravinsky premières were A-list events; at one of them, Proust and Joyce sat next to each other and talked about truffles. Stravinsky's life took on a certain Andy Warhol quality, as is evident in the questions that Robert Craft asked the composer in the first of their "conversation books":

> You were a friend of D'Annunzio's at one time, weren't you? . . . You knew Rodin, didn't you? . . . Wasn't there also a question of Modigliani doing a portrait of you? . . . I

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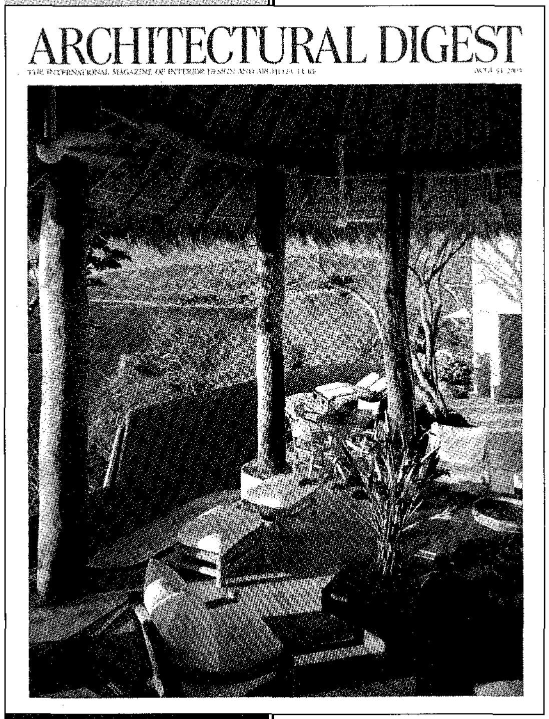

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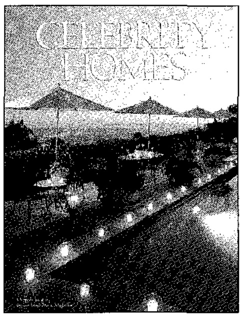

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once heard you describe your meeting Claude Monet. . . . You were with Mayakovsky very often on his famous Paris trip in 1922? . . . Would you describe your last meeting with Proust? . . . How did Giacometti come to make his drawings of you?

Covering the period of the twenties, the pages of the Walsh biography are so thick with parties, tours, disputes, and affairs that it's hard to see how anything got written. Stravinsky kept on working, but, for a time, the scale of his music noticeably narrowed. Perhaps by way of justifying the multiplication of miniatures in his output, he released manifestos explaining why they had to be just so. In 1924, he wrote an essay on his Octet for Winds, in which he announced, "My Octet is not an 'emotive' work but a musical composition based on objective elements which are sufficient in themselves." Some years later, in his "Autobiography," he issued the notorious epigram "Music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to *express* anything at all." Such language was the height of chic in the twenties, although Stravinsky need not have read any Ezra Pound to articulate it. He was simply adding new buzzwords to the aestheticism of the Diaghilev circle, and Oscar Wilde may be cited as his ultimate source. "Art never expresses anything but itself," Wilde had written, in 1891. "It has an independent life . . . and develops purely on its own lines."

Stravinsky's new music and new rhetoric set off a feeding frenzy that exceeded even the fuss over the "Rite." A second stream of twentieth-century music—a kind of tonal modernism—flowed out from him, and single pieces of his inspired entire careers. Aaron Copland came from the "Symphonies of Wind Instruments," Carl Orff from "Les Noces," Francis Poulenc from "Pulcinella," Kurt Weill from "Histoire du Soldat." Imitators in the second rank were repeatedly flummoxed by the master's habit of reversing himself midstream. At the end of the twenties, for example, he took to string instruments again, writing "Apollon Musagète," a knowingly pretty pastoral for strings alone. Constant Lambert, in his 1934 diatribe "Music Ho!: A Study of Music in Decline," recalled Stravinsky "urging young composers to give their tunes to the violins and not to the trumpet on the grounds that too many people had been writing tunes for the trumpet in the last few years."

More than a few Stravinsky works of the twenties and thirties support Lambert's thesis that the magus of the "Rite" had become a fashion plate. The success of his Baroque pastiche "Pulcinella," a coy arrangement of tunes ascribed to Pergolesi, encouraged him to rewrite favorite eras of musical history with sublime insouciance. Even his sombre score for Cocteau's "Oedipus Rex" gave a wink as it assumed grand-opera poses. (Leonard Bernstein observed that the climactic choruses of "Oedipus" sound like college-football fight songs.) In his concertos and sonatas, Stravinsky put quotation marks around traditional forms. Such pieces participated in a kind of intellectual farce: only when the composer began to write "pure," "absolute" music did he start to explain what his music was saying, or, more precisely, not saying. A bright little work like the Octet took on more heft when one heard everything that it was not: it wasn't the Mendelssohn Octet for Strings, it wasn't warm, it wasn't "expressive." But to know what it wasn't you had to read the program. Stravinsky's commentaries were romantic programs stripped of romantic rhetoric. Once, composers had chattered on about swans and death; now they spoke of "constructions" and "objects."

Stravinsky soon rose above this kind of causerie, although many of his followers became addicted to it. In the late twenties and into the early thirties, as his finances improved, his style relaxed. He produced two of his loveliest and deepest scores, "Symphony of Psalms" and "Perséphone," distributing pristine harmonies in spacious, proto-minimalist designs. (In February, Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony give "Perséphone" a rare hearing at Carnegie Hall.) In the forties, comfortably settled in Los Angeles, he resumed his labors in the longer forms. There was a rage for new symphonies, and Stravinsky produced the Symphony in Three Movements in response. One of the peaks of his output, it embraces rather than dances around its chosen form; it supplies the bold gestures and brassy endings of the

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symphonic tradition, even as it dismantles those devices and adapts them to a sleek Stravinskyan machine.

After the Second World War came the catastrophe: Stravinsky went out of fashion. His later "neoclassical" works, culminating in his only full-scale opera, "The Rake's Progress," failed to impress the intellectual wing of modern music. A new wave of avant-gardists, led by Pierre Boulez, declared that tonality—even Stravinsky's oblique and fragmented kind—was impossible. Indeed, Boulez's first act as a musical politician was to lead a booing section at a Stravinsky concert in Paris in 1945—one more scandal at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Seven years later, the aging composer returned to Paris and heard the youngsters jeer a revival of his "Oedipus." (Boulez, in the wisdom of his own old age, has decided that some of the neoclassical works are acceptable, and will conduct the Symphony in Three Movements at Carnegie in March. Young composers who wish to honor Boulez's legacy should buy up the cheap tickets and boo him.) That same year, during a drive into the Mojave Desert, Stravinsky broke down in tears, saying that his career was at an end.

Enter Robert Craft, a young conductor and new-music expert, who had become Stravinsky's assistant in 1948 and, later, "Bobsky," his substitute son. (The composer grew apart from his own children after the death of his first wife, Catherine, in 1939, and his subsequent marriage to Vera de Bosset, who had been his mistress for twenty years.) The move toward twelve-tone writing was made easier by the fact that Schoenberg had died the previous year and would not have the satisfaction of seeing his rival succumb to his influence. It has been suggested that Craft, a charmingly brash character, bullied Stravinsky into accepting serial composition, and there are moments in Craft's diaries when such a process seems to be under way. Recounting that crisis in the Mojave, Craft adds, "He is suffering the shock of recognition that Schoenberg's music is richer in substance than his own." Did Stravinsky say or imply such a thing to Craft? Or did Craft say or imply such a thing to Stravinsky? For once, the diarist skimps on the details. He later claimed, straight out, "Without me Stravinsky would not have taken the path he did after 'The Rake's Progress.'" Yet the composer had probably chosen Craft as the bearer of an ultimatum that he wanted to hear. The awe that he felt for Schoenberg back in 1912 was bound to resurface somewhere down the line.

Craft launched a campaign to enrich Stravinsky's already active intellectual life and to maximize his already vast reputation. He became almost a second Rimsky-Korsakov, tutoring the old man in the Second Viennese School, in the new-old sound of Renaissance polyphony, in Anglo-American authors. Stravinsky was encouraged to place himself in the company not only of the Viennese modernists but also of Joyce and Eliot. Stravinsky's politics were liberalized, and it was forgotten that he had been an admirer of Mussolini. Craft also wrote up a popular series of dialogues, which started out as an *echt*-Stravinskyan barrage of opinions and later devolved into a weird sort of typewriterly gobbledygook:

CRAFT: Have eighty-five years strengthened your belief in the continuity of life and art, Mr. Stravinsky?
STRAVINSKY: It seems to me, on the contrary, that discontinuity must be only a short way ahead. Certainly in another four score and five the "clones" bred by genetic engineers to the specifications of Bureaus of Human Uses will differ from me far more than I differ from, say, the astronomers of Fowlis Wester and Stonehenge (who, it now appears, must have known a lunar movement later "discovered" by Tycho Brahe).

Come again, Mr. Stravinsky? The composer's real voice, funny and unflappable, is all over Craft's diaries, which have been reissued by Vanderbilt University Press. Here is Stravinsky in conversation with some older female admirers at a reception in New Zealand:

FIRST PATRON: Frankly, Mr. Stravinsky, I like "Firebird" best of all your works.
STRAVINSKY: And what a charming hat you have.
SECOND PATRON: Do you like architecture, Mr. Stravinsky?
STRAVINSKY: Let me think about it.

Throughout the fifties and sixties, Craft-Stravinsky was a cottage industry, the aim of which was to keep the composer's name current in all countries and in all media. It travelled the world, ap-

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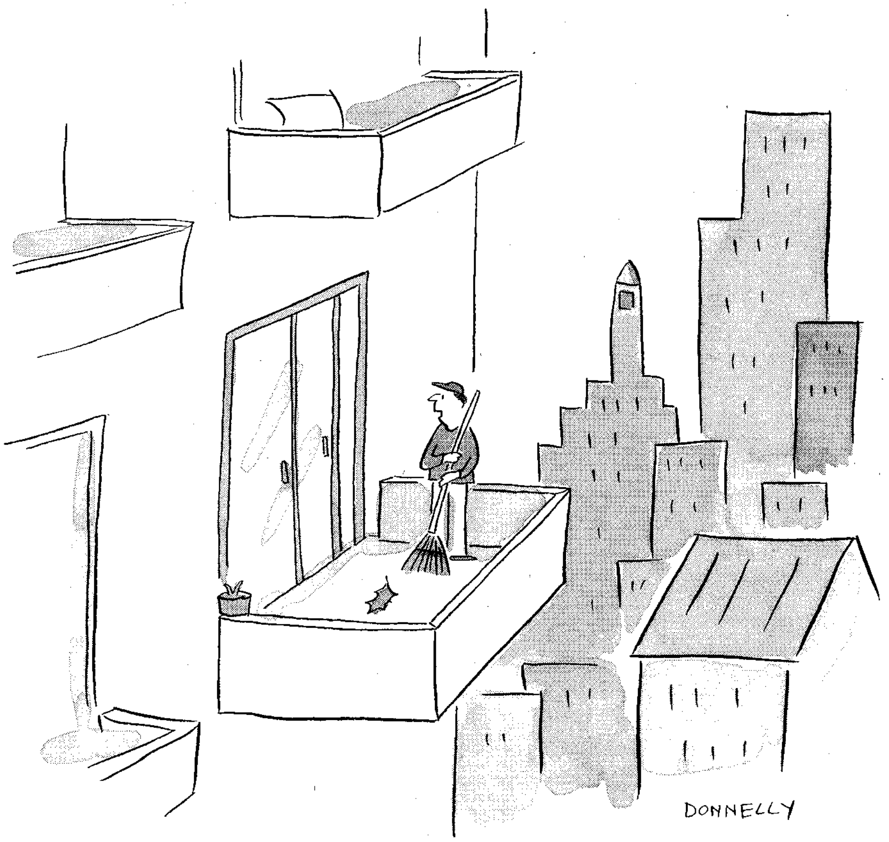
pearing in places as various as Tokyo, Tahiti, Rio, and Jerusalem. It had free rein at Columbia Records, thanks in part to the company's profits from "My Fair Lady." Cameras and tape recorders followed the great man everywhere, and his courtly manners and sharp quips always made for good copy. Beneath the surface, he remained watchful, suspicious, insecure. Michael Tilson Thomas remembers him as "an old bird of prey, a bit feeble but still dangerous." He befriended younger composers, such as Lukas Foss and Elliott Carter, who seemed to represent the wave of the future. Anyone with a popular following, however, came in for abuse. "Nothing fails like success," he said of Britten's "War Requiem," as if channeling Schoenberg's spirit.

Craft's true mission was to restore his hero's confidence. The twelve-tone period was the final and, in some ways, the most impressive demonstration of Stravinsky's mastery. The new technique presented a challenge because it worked against the grain of his voice: his love of ostinato—repetitions of one note or of a short figure—ran counter to the Schoenbergian principle of treating all notes in the series equally. But Stravinsky simply suspended the operation of the series when he came upon a pattern or a chord that he liked, and, as Berg had done before him, he rigged the series to generate tonal material. It's difficult to see what the twelve-tone method really gained him, other than the chance to show that he could do it, too.

The more significant transformation came right at the end, when the old Russian tone, which had been absent for decades, crept back in. The reason for its return was undoubtedly Stravinsky's momentous tour of the Soviet Union in 1962. The shocks of nostalgia that he experienced during this trip seemed to linger in his musical valediction, the "Requiem Canticles." One Russian-born colleague remarked on the Requiem's "tragic beauty," which is not a phrase that could be comfortably applied to any other work in the composer's output. The mesmerizing polytonal processions of the "Rite" return, but they move more slowly, as if draped in sorrow. At the end, ambiguous bell chords ring fiercely into the distance. Taruskin closes his study of Stravinsky by asking whether the Requiem heralded a never-to-be-



"I'll be in, honey, as soon as I rake the leaf."

realized "new 'Russian period' "—one in which the everlasting brilliance of Stravinsky's technique might have assimilated the recovered memories of his tradition. But the old man was done. In the only self-indulgent gesture of his career, he had written a Requiem for himself.

Stravinsky once said, "To listen is an effort, and just to hear is no merit. A duck hears also." His music asks us to listen, note by note. His greatness emerges not so much in his sweeping gestures—although he could supply those on demand—as in his constant stream of exquisite detail. He polished everything relentlessly, even the bric-a-brac he picked up off the musical street. He'd start with a brusque four-note tune; stretch it out over an asymmetrical but catchy rhythm; stop on one note in a kind of funky stutter; punctuate the mass with a few oddly voiced but just-so chords; and suddenly the gates of Stravinskyland would swing open.

He is the modern composer's daily bread, but he occupies a more tenuous place in the hearts of listeners. Frankly, they still like "Firebird" best. The later music is more rarely played, and not necessarily because it is more difficult. Next to the public sculpture of Mahler and Shostakovich, a porcelain masterwork such as "Orpheus" can have a fussy, reticent air. Stravinsky prospers in other surroundings: in festivals, such as Lincoln Center's and Carnegie's this season; on recordings, where conductors such as Tilson Thomas and Riccardo Chailly have brought Stravinsky performance to a radiant level; and, most important, at the ballet, where his music is fleshed out by dancers. But all the works after the "Rite" are in some way more tightly wound, more guarded, as if suffering from the insecurities that shadowed the man. Insecurity, Stephen Walsh says, was "the demon that lurked permanently in the inner regions of Stravinsky's consciousness." He was driven by the fear of falling behind.

Stravinsky's student works show a composer who has a fine technique but has nothing pressing to say. He moved past the novice stage by developing his technique until it became a revelation in itself. Many critics suggested that he never did find an emotional core. Ned Rorem put the case most concisely: "I am dazzled by his intelligence and scared by his force, but my heart is not melted." Stravinsky would respond to such criticism by saying that he was not in the business of melting hearts. He opposed "personality" in music and believed in the supremacy of taste. Consider, for example, his cool response to "Wozzeck," Berg's dissonant spellbinder. He admired the opera but criticized the orchestral interlude that follows Wozzeck's death. "Until this point the artist stays behind his constructions," Stravinsky said, "but here he comes up front to tell us exactly how he feels." In fact, the final interlude in "Wozzeck" is one of the most deeply felt episodes in music, and the point of it is not the "how he feels" but the "here he comes." We don't know what Berg is saying, but we do know that he is speaking directly to us, arms outstretched.

The D-minor climax of "Wozzeck" is not so much an emotional outburst as an aesthetic risk—a startling inconsistency in what appears to be an atonal work. It is the kind of risk that Stravinsky never took. Prolonged exposure to his immaculate art can create a longing for human error, for frailty, for a hint of vulgarity or kitsch. Stravinsky did, of course, use kitschy tunes and vulgar noises, but he used them with such calculation that they became more patterns on the grid. Even in his surrealist phase, he juxtaposed oddities in a rigorously odd way. And it was the need for control, finally, that bound Stravinsky and Schoenberg together and defined the modernist aesthetic. Schoenberg sought to rationalize music on the level of technique; Stravinsky sought to rationalize it on the level of style. But who wants rational music? Most of us can live without it.

At the end of his 1913 essay on the "Rite," Jacques Rivière, the prophet of modernism, had a moment of hesitation. Much as he admired the score, he confessed that it left him with a vaguely despondent feeling. "There are works that overflow with accusations, hopes, encouragements," he wrote. "You suffer, regret, take confidence with them; they contain all the beautiful perturbations of the spirit; you give yourself to them as to the counsel of a friend; they have a moral quality and always in some way partake of pity." Stravinsky's masterpiece, he admitted, was not among them. ♦

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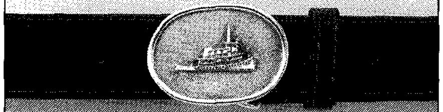

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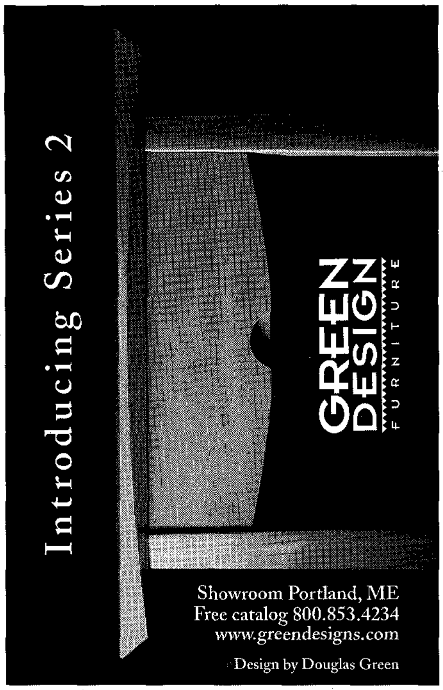

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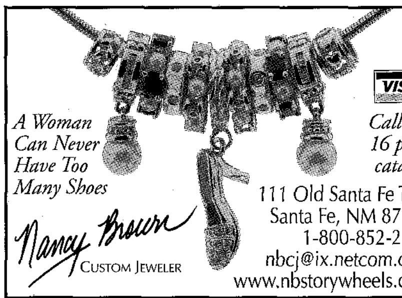

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IN A STRANGE LAND

Tom Wolfe's America.

BY LOUIS MENAND

For nearly two centuries, people believed that the United States was basically a solid mass of human sameness occasionally washed over by various forms of weirdness. Then, in 1957, a man named Jack Kerouac revealed that the United States was actually many varieties of human weirdness concealed beneath a thin veneer of sameness. After spending several years driving back and forth across the country with a bunch of guys on amphetamines (the nineteen-fifties notion of "field work"), Kerouac concluded that an enormous web of regional subcultures was flourishing out beyond the horizon of the official gaze. He published his findings in "On the Road"; and for the next fifteen years, inspired by stories of this new land, men and women with steno pads and Bic pens set out to capture pieces of it and bring them back to New York City, where they could be made into magazine articles. One of these was Tom Wolfe.

The year "On the Road" came out, Wolfe was getting a Ph.D. in American Studies, from Yale, with a dissertation on Communist activity among American writers in the nineteen-thirties. Nineteen-fifty-seven was actually the best year in human history to take a Ph.D.: it was the year the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, an event that so unnerved the American government that it began to pour vast sums into higher education in an effort to close something called the "technology gap." Over the next ten years, hundreds of thousands of new professors were hired at American colleges and universities. Wolfe got a job loading trucks.

It was the Kerouac thing to do, but Wolfe found that he was not having Kerouac's luck, and he started looking for a job at a newspaper. He got one at the Springfield *Union*, in Massachusetts, went from there to the Washington *Post*, and in 1962 ended up at the New York *Herald Tribune*. The *Herald Tribune* had a Sunday magazine insert edited by Clay Felker, formerly an editor at *Esquire*, and Wolfe became one of its two staff writers; the other was Jimmy Breslin. Wolfe covered minor feature stories like the Hot Rod and Custom Car Show at the Coliseum and Cassius Clay's visit to New York. (Cassius Clay was soon to announce that he was no longer Cassius Clay when Wolfe interviewed him; Wolfe, as he later acknowledged, missed the story.)

In 1963, there was a newspaper strike in New York, which, besides leading to the creation of *The New York Review of Books*, put Wolfe temporarily out of a job. He went to *Esquire*, then edited by Harold Hayes, and got an assignment to do a longer piece on custom cars. He spent weeks in California researching the story, but when it came time to write it he found himself completely blocked. His editors finally despaired and told him to type up his notes; someone at the magazine would turn them into a piece. According to legend, Wolfe pulled an all-nighter and delivered a forty-nine-page stream-of-consciousness memo that *Esquire* published, almost verbatim, as "There Goes (Varoom! Varoom!) That Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby" (a title supplied by the editors). There was a demand for more of the same, Wolfe met it, and fifteen months later, in 1965, he brought out a collection of magazine pieces. It was a best-seller. He went on to produce many more.

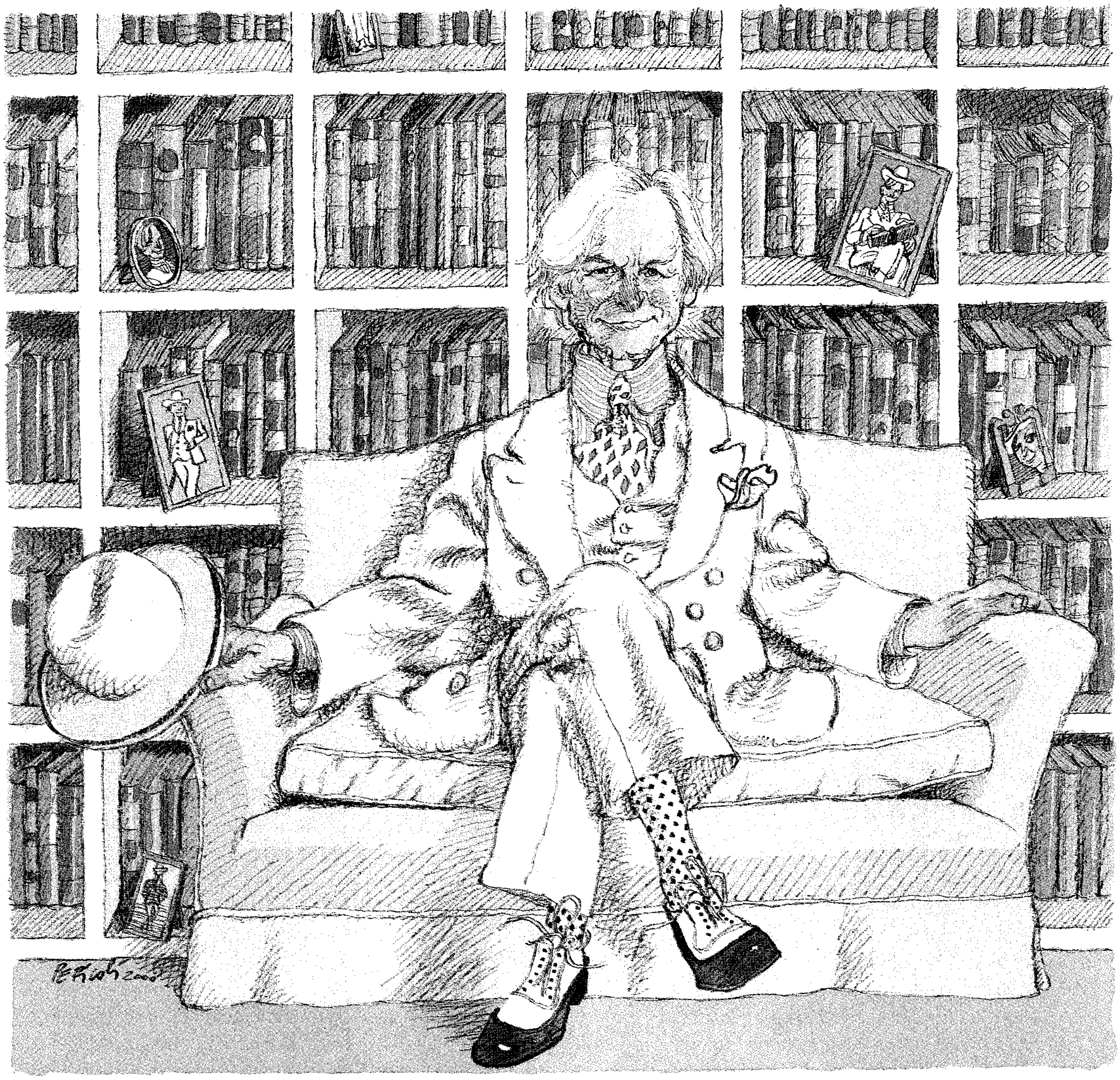
"Hooking Up" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $25) is Wolfe's first collection of shorter pieces in twenty years. He has, of course, spent most of that time writing two huge novels and watching them sell millions of copies. The longest item in the new book, a novella called "Ambush at Fort Bragg," first published in *Rolling Stone* in 1996, is an outtake (or a false start) from the more recent of the novels, "A Man in Full." "Hooking Up" also in-

TULLIO PERICOLI

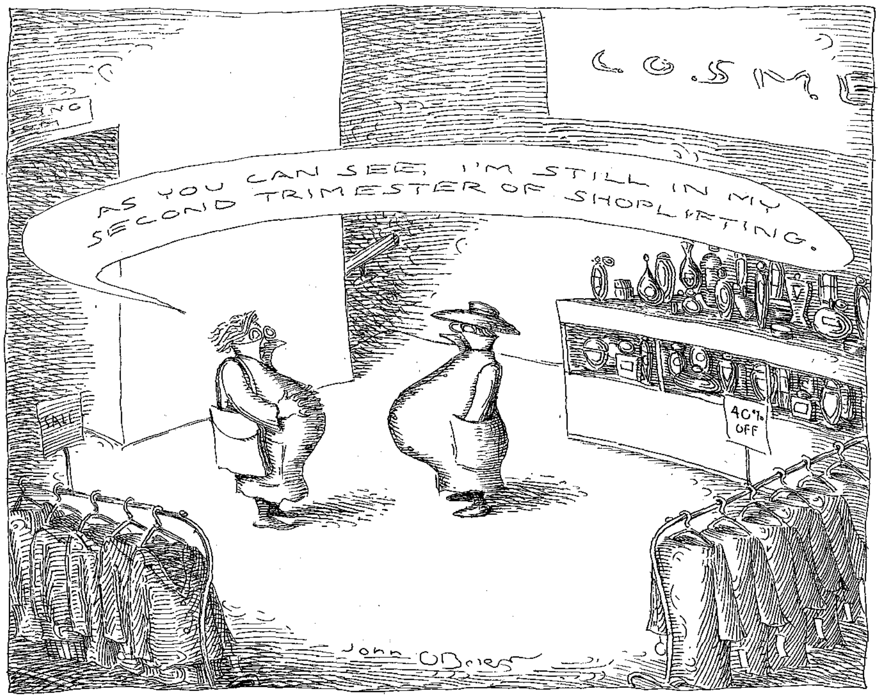
cludes a long response to John Updike, who reviewed "A Man in Full" in *The New Yorker;* Norman Mailer, who reviewed it in *The New York Review of Books;* and John Irving, who said bad things about it on a Canadian television program. The gist of their complaint might be summed up in a remark Truman Capote once made about Kerouac: "It is not writing," he said; "it is only typing." Wolfe's reply is called "My Three Stooges," and although it's not exactly recommended reading—it's the kind of interminable rant about some pet peeve that most people bore their spouses to death with at the dinner table but have the sense to edit down for strangers—it's a pretty fair redaction of the Wolfean self-conception.

Which, further redacted, goes something like this: Everything is great about America, with one exception, which is its highbrow culture. The problem there is that, first, most American intellectuals are Marxists, and, second, most American writers and artists are aesthetes. How did this happen? Slavish imitation of Europe is the answer. Sometime around the turn of the last century, Europeans came up with the notion that being an intellectual meant holding forth on subjects you know nothing about, and being an artist meant regarding reality as a contemptible subject matter for art; and for the past fifty years American highbrows have been knocking themselves out trying to live up to this conception. The consequence is that practically the only people left on the planet who don't see what a fantastic place America is, lording it over the rest of mankind while oozing weirdness at every pore, are American novelists and intellectuals—and they're paying the price, because no one is buying their books. People are buying Tom Wolfe's books instead, because he is a realist and a reporter. He goes out and gets his story, the way Balzac and Dickens and Thackeray got theirs.

It wasn't always like this, Wolfe points out. Once, giants of realism strode the



In "Hooking Up," Wolfe argues that everything is great about America with one exception, which is its highbrow culture.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John O'Brien

land and took the big prizes. John Steinbeck (Nobel Prize, 1962, plus some excellent movie deals) was such a writer. So was Sinclair Lewis, who, in accepting his Nobel, in 1930, urged American writers to "give America a literature worthy of her vastness." "Can anyone imagine my three stooges expressing any such sentiment?" Wolfe inquires. "Can anyone imagine them even wondering if America is due anything at all from writers?"

Here even the drowsiest spouse might raise a tired eyebrow. Possibly there are novelists around who turn their backs on life in order to refine the inner vision, or whatever; but Updike, Mailer, and Irving? Updike's canvas in the Rabbit books is not vast? Mailer finds America boring? Irving is insufficiently Dickensian? In fact, what big-name novelists are we talking about when we deplore the lack of literary attention to our great land in all its vital complexity and complex vitality? DeLillo? Morrison? Roth? Oates? Pynchon? Doctorow? Hello? Is anybody home?

The phantom Wolfe is flailing away at in "My Three Stooges" (and which he has flailed away at many times elsewhere) did once have life. That was back at Yale in 1957, when people were taught to draw a bright line between the work of art—luminously self-reflexive, a structure of formal elements in creative tension, and so forth—and the work of fact: impersonal, literal, doggedly referential. There are people around who still believe in this distinction, but not many, and "The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby" is one of the reasons why. The whole point of the New Journalism, the school with which Wolfe's name is forever associated, was to knock over the fences people had erected in their heads to keep literature separate from journalism. Writers like Wolfe and Capote and Mailer didn't just change the way people thought about journalism; they helped to change the way people thought about literature, too. The idea that literature is some rarefied textual artifact has been as good as dead since 1965.

There are some marvellous exhibitions of tendentiousness in "Hooking Up," but I think most observers would give the prize to "In the Land of the Rococo Marxists," an essay in which Wolfe sets out to understand why Americans did not greet the new millennium with a fully justified display of patriotic pride. He discovers that the people responsible for this are a couple of Europeans, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. American academic life, Wolfe believes, is in thrall to these writers and their theory of deconstruction, which Wolfe has figured for a kind of Marxism on stilts, teaching all to doubt the greatness of a great land.

Yikes. Where's that vaunted reporting when you need it? Derrida and Foucault (who was not a deconstructionist, but never mind) had their day in the American university, but it was long ago, and even then they were the enthusiasm of an embattled minority. To the extent that they represented anything about academic thought, they were part of a general renunciation of the Marxist approach that happened more than thirty years ago. Wolfe has let it be known that his next novel will be about academic life. No doubt there is enough silliness there to float a book: the academy is the eternal default subject of exhausted satirists. But if Wolfe doesn't get up to speed with what's going on, people will think he doesn't know what he's talking about. They'll think he's an intellectual.

It says something about the quality of the writing Wolfe is currently churning out that the best piece in "Hooking Up" is thirty-five years old. This is the famous "profile" of William Shawn, published in two parts in the *Herald Tribune's* Sunday magazine as "Tiny Mummies! The True Story of the Ruler of 43rd Street's Land of the Walking Dead" and "Lost in the Whichy Thicket: *The New Yorker*." It is extremely vicious, extremely funny, and not entirely wrong (not entirely right, either, but accuracy is not the test of satire). It set a little world on its ear.

That wasn't entirely the idea. Wolfe and Felker imagined the piece, Wolfe later said, as "a lark." They took their inspiration, in fact, from a wicked profile of Henry Luce that Wolcott Gibbs had written, in a parody of Timese, for *The New Yorker* in 1936. When Shawn heard about Wolfe's piece, he made the mistake of writing to the *Herald Tribune's* publisher, John Hay Whitney, asking him to suppress it. Wolfe's editors made the letter public, and when the piece appeared practically the entire journalistic establishment descended on Wolfe with all the considerable gravitas at its command. Joseph Alsop, Murray Kempton, and Nat Hentoff condemned the piece; Dwight Macdonald published a two-part attack on Wolfe in *The New York Review of Books;* Walter Lippmann allowed it to be known that he regarded Wolfe as "an incompetent ass." J. D. Salinger, already buried away in his New Hampshire refuge, fired off a one-sentence telegram to Whitney predicting eternal

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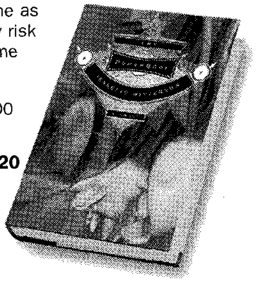

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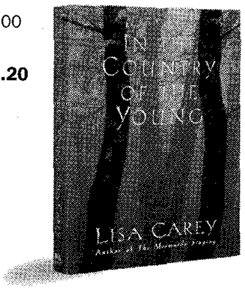

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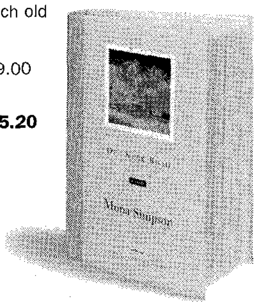

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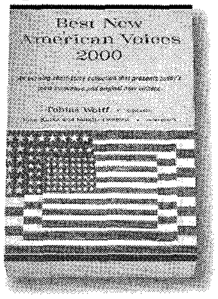

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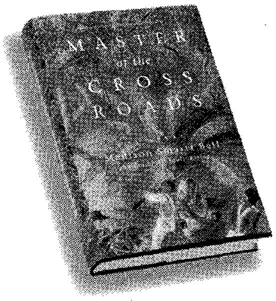

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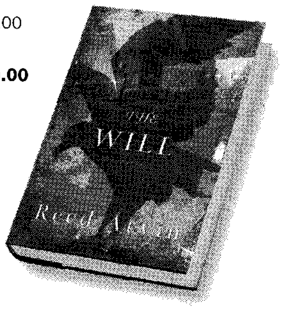

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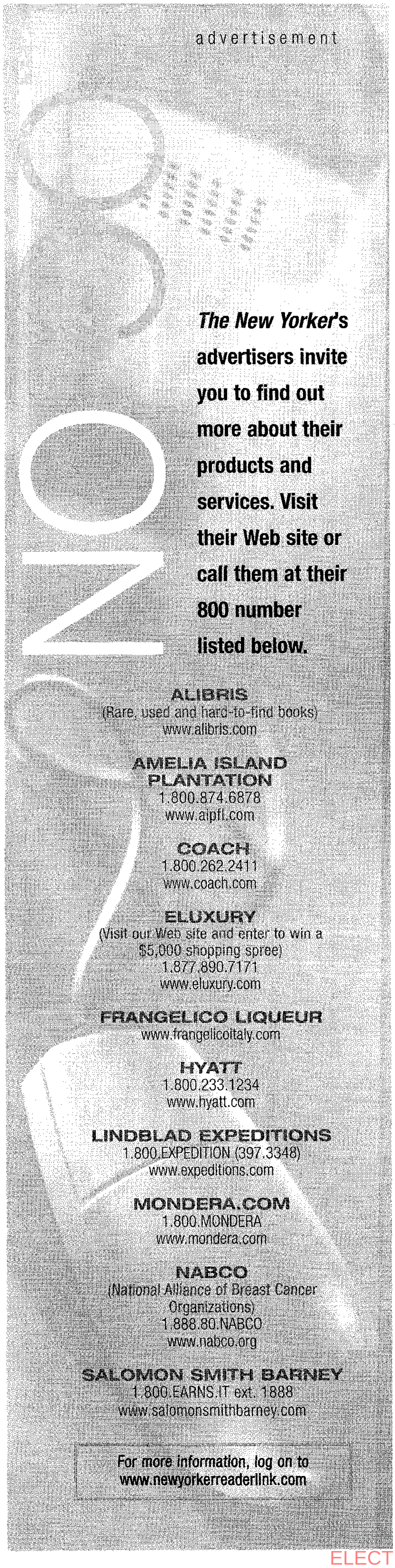

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disapprobation for everyone involved. It is said that Felker was not admitted to the Century Club because of what he had done (*that's* a punishment that fits the crime), and the *Herald Tribune* did fold soon after; but life, as it has a way of doing, went on. Whitney became the chairman of the *International Herald Tribune;* Felker transformed his Sunday supplement into *New York* magazine; and in 1966 *The New Yorker* sold more pages of advertising than in any other year in its history.

"Tiny Mummies" was too serious to be a prank and not serious enough to be a critique. There are about six facts in it, and the rest is, as Wolfe later conceded, "sheer rhetorical showboating." What is kind of great about it really has nothing to do with its quality as journalism, or even as satire. It's that it was a piece firmly predicated on the cardinal premise of all journalism, which is that a cat may look at a king. William Shawn wasn't just the editor of the country's most powerful literary magazine in 1965; he was the editor of its most commercially successful magazine. The year Wolfe's piece appeared, *The New Yorker* carried 6,092 pages of advertising. The magazine in second place, *Business Week*, had 4,808. Felker and Wolfe were overworked employees of a paper poised to go down the tubes. They cast about for a piety they could poke a hole in, and they found a big one.

By the time of "Tiny Mummies," the movement eventually known as the New Journalism was well under way. Hayes was running reported pieces by Mailer, Gay Talese, Garry Wills, and Michael Herr in *Esquire;* George Plimpton soon brought out "Paper Lion," about his experience as a quarterback for the Detroit Lions; Hunter Thompson published his first book, about his travels with the Hell's Angels; Joan Didion began publishing the pieces she would collect in "Slouching Towards Bethlehem." Wolfe was everywhere, and was everywhere identified with the new movement, and the effect was to make it seem as though he was setting up his style of reporting against the style represented by *The New Yorker*—that the purpose of his profile of Shawn had been to discredit a magazine that had every right to claim to have pioneered literary reportage.

Wolfe undoubtedly figured to ride the New Journalism to some sort of personal renown, just as he now promotes his fiction with manifestos about the new realism. But he never tried to tie his attack on Shawn's *New Yorker* to the New Journalism (a term he credited, incidentally, to Pete Hamill). Even in "Tiny Mummies," he had mostly good words for the magazine under its first editor, Harold Ross; he praised John Hersey's "Hiroshima," a piece published when Ross was editor but at Shawn's urging; he said admiring things about A. J. Liebling; he gushed over Lillian Ross's profile of Hemingway. Six months after "Tiny Mummies," Capote's "In Cold Blood," the work that did more than any other to promote the notion of a new blend of reporting and novel-writing, was serialized in *The New Yorker.* (And Capote was attacked in *Esquire* soon after for playing fast and loose with the facts.) Wolfe, to his credit, never pretended that it was all Felker and Hayes. "If anyone wants to maintain that the current tradition starts with *The New Yorker* and *True*," he wrote in the introduction to his anthology "The New Journalism," in 1973, "I will not contest the point."

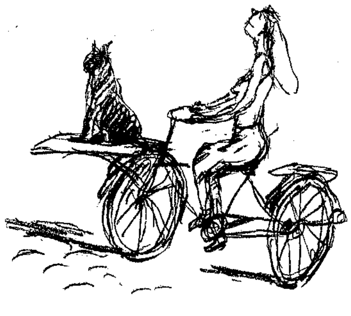
By 1973, though, the New Journalism was largely played out. Two things had happened. The first was that the general-interest magazine culture on which the genre depended collapsed in the Nixon recession of the early nineteen-seventies, and it never recovered. Even the magazines that survived never approached the advertising levels of the mid-sixties. For fifteen or twenty years, during the fifties and sixties, magazines were central to the culture of daily life in the United States in a way they haven't been since. As purveyors of the news about American weirdness, they were superseded by television, and the advertisers followed.

And then America stopped seeming quite so weird. Most of the pieces that got anthologized as examples of the New Journalism were either about radical politics, a phenomenon that had disappeared from the radar screen by the mid-seventies, or about cults and kooks and subcultures—the land of weirdness Kerouac had discovered. Partly through exposure and partly through the homogenizing effects of the mass media, the weirdness began to disappear. The United States now looks once again like a solid mass of human sameness, from sea to shining sea. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Quick and the Dead, *by Joy Williams (Knopf; $25)*. Williams, once one of the most highly praised American writers, hasn't published fiction in almost a decade. Now she has returned, with this beautifully written, profoundly strange, and fiercely mordant novel, which tracks a motley trio of motherless girls in the American West: Alice, who lives with her grandparents and exists in a state of crystalline cynicism; Annabel, who lives with her widowed father and dreams of a smooth transition to adulthood; and Corvus, whose inwardness borders on a kind of autism. Williams has wisely done away with a linear plot in favor of a latticework of subplots that allow for maximum resonance of her main themes, which include loss, imagination, and the knotty problem of emergent sexual identity. The three girls are complemented by a clutch of perfectly realized supporting characters, including Annabel's father, who wrestles with his homosexuality even as he is haunted by his late wife.

Ho Chi Minh, *by William J. Duiker (Hyperion; $35)*. Duiker is among America's leading authorities on Vietnam, and his balance is as helpful as his learning throughout this harrowing story. In 1911, the twenty-one-year-old Ho fled French repression in Indochina. He wandered through the United States, England, and France until 1923, when, convinced that the Communists were imperialism's most energetic opponents, he went to Moscow. As a Comintern agent in Asia, he was a Communist errand boy, subject to Party discipline, to the vagaries of Party lines, and to Stalin's suspiciousness, while simultaneously being hunted by the police of several nations. When at last the Communists achieved power in Vietnam, other leaders had arisen, and Duiker cannot always say which of the government's policies, such as the disastrous land reform, were Ho's idea. His was a dreary, dangerous life, and it is impossible not to feel sorry for a man who sacrificed political freedom—both his own and his country's—for Vietnam's independence from France.



This Craft of Verse, *by Jorge Luis Borges (Harvard; $22.95)*. If few writers in history have been as prodigiously learned as Borges, certainly none wore their learning so lightly or humbly. A series of taped lectures—given at Harvard in 1967 but only recently transcribed—display the eloquence and erudite, offhand wit familiar from his writings as well as a charming, plainspoken modesty. Ostensibly about poetics, the talks were an occasion for Borges to review his lifelong relationship with literature, including his passion for English. (He quotes from memory Shakespeare, Shaw, Emerson, Chesterton, and Robert Louis Stevenson, among others.) Ultimately reluctant to speak of his own work (and apologetic when he does), he says, "I think the happiness of a reader is beyond that of a writer, for a reader need feel no trouble, no anxiety: he is merely out for happiness. And happiness, when you are a reader, is frequent."

Stay the Hand of Vengeance, *by Gary Jonathan Bass (Princeton; $29.95)*. Why war-crimes tribunals? In this dense and compelling account, which examines trials from St. Helena to The Hague, Bass, a professor at Princeton, makes a realist's case for idealism and a pessimist's case for perseverance. While conceding that a government will rarely stage a trial if doing so will put its own soldiers at risk or if its public is indifferent to the injustice in question, Bass argues that the fact that tribunals exist at all can be explained only by a moral commitment to hold foreign policy to liberalism's cumbersome legal standards. And while tribunals tempt violent backlash and cannot hope to punish all the guilty, they are still the best means we have to respond to wartime atrocities.

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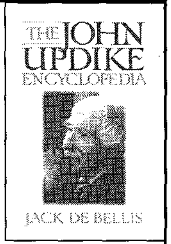

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IN FASHION

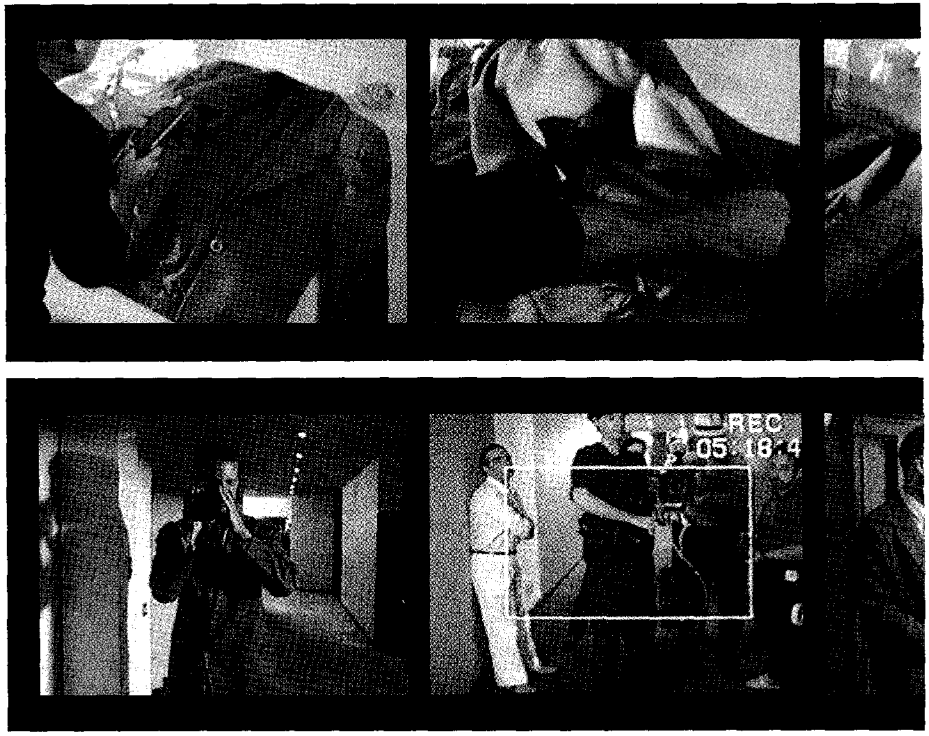
MAN OF THE CLOTH

Armani at the Guggenheim.

BY JUDITH THURMAN

In 1968, Giorgio Armani had recently been promoted from his first job as an adult, styling department-store windows, and was designing menswear for Nino Cerruti. I was a young American living on a shoestring in Rome. A well-born woman whom I knew slightly invited me to a Halloween party at her villa outside the city. The Halloween of fright masks and trick-or-treat is not an Italian tradition, but she had spent some time in New York and wanted to celebrate with a costume ball. "It won't be stuffy," she assured me. "No *bella figura*. I've ordered everyone to wear something silly and fantastic!"

My homemade costume, of which I was modestly proud, was a sheath of lime-green polyester chenille, ruched to resemble the casing of a caterpillar—a plump one. Two muslin wings, stiffened with picture wire, emerged at the shoulder blades, one artfully half crumpled, as if it had been bruised in the birth struggle. A pair of quivering antennae were attached to a headband of matching plush. Luckily, I got lost on the labyrinthine ring of roads around Rome, and by the time I arrived at the villa the party was well under way. It was a warm autumn night, and the French doors were open to formal gardens. From a distance, I could see that all the female guests, and my hostess, were in evening dress, and all the men in tuxedos.



Frames from "Made in Milan," a documentary about Giorgio Armani directed by Mar

COURTESY OF GIORGIO ARMANI

I needed Armani that night, although he had not yet gone into the business of providing the illusion of breeding and confidence to women who are not born to it. Perhaps because he was a provincial boy—the son of a trucking-company manager from the unstylish industrial city of Piacenza—he has always been particularly sensitive to the risk of courting ridicule in overly ambitious or exotic clothing and bright colors. Armani is the champion of the insecure, the newly hatched, the self-doubting and ingenuous, and that has been his charm for the ingénues of Hollywood, male and female, of all ages. The French have never cottoned to Armani for the same reason, though in part, too, because he is a foreign upstart who challenged their preëminence in ready-to-wear. They tend to look with disdain on any Prometheus who presumes to steal the fire of sacred chic for mass diffusion.

orsese in 1991. *The deconstructed jacket launched Armani's career, which is now the subject of a reverent retrospective.*

Leaving the Guggenheim Museum under the influence of the new Armani retrospective, which opened there on October 20th and runs through January 17th, I was struck by the resemblance of Frank Lloyd Wright's modernist ziggurat to one of Edith Sitwell's ambitious, exotic turbans. A girl of Sitwell's generation learned at an early age that she could aspire to express herself through fashion in one of two roles: the priestess or the object of worship. With a prominent nose and a great deal to say, she was probably destined to be a priestess. This dilemma was current as late as my own youth, and it was Armani who helped abolish it.

Wright himself was a man of fashion, a canny dresser who, like Armani, understood how to make his clothes project aesthetic flair without sacrificing professional sobriety—a sort of cross between J. P. Morgan and Ezra Pound. On my piano, I have a photograph taken in 1938 of Wright with an uncle of mine who was his business partner in a big, doomed real-estate venture. The architect and the entrepreneur are both wearing confidence-inspiring bespoke suits: Wright's a single-breasted navy pinstripe dandified by an Edwardian tie and a gold loupe on an opera-length chain, my uncle's a double-breasted British tweed with a matching waistcoat that surely exuded a clubby scent of malt whiskey and tobacco. These are the kinds of suits that, with a dart or two, Dietrich and Garbo modelled with such transgressive glamour around the same time, and the images of those smoldering northern sirens commandeering a mogul's battle garb made their impression on the young Armani, always a big fan of movies and broad-shouldered, enterprising women.

Most of the hussies who affected trousers before the late nineteen-sixties were only flirting with transvestism. They wanted the convenience and modernity of men's clothes, and with them a just portion of social virility (not the same as sexual virility). Armani's sartorial innovations have less to do with "androgyny"—a ubiquitous word in the four-hundred-page, six-and-a-half-pound catalogue to the exhibition—than they do with camouflage. He did not "deconstruct" gender. He deconstructed a jacket, ripping out the lining or interlining, adjusting the placement of the buttons, and changing the proportions of the collar, lapel, and shoulders.

In 1975, Armani showed a woman's version of the same garment—radical but not militant—that he had designed for men a season earlier. Its slouchy drape skimmed the body in a sensual way, without flaunting or constraining it. The cut, slightly oversized, like the pajamas of a Pierrot, flattered the heavy and gave the thin a waifish charm. As a working uniform, it was neutral and dignified enough to pass muster with both feminists and bosses. The look, in fact, functioned "semiotically"—another favorite catalogue word—like a good pair of sunglasses. You could read into it what you wanted to: power, nonchalance, sexual cool, entitlement, but also a hidden vulnerability—the priestess and the object of worship in one. An Armani suit steeled the nerve of women without masculinizing them, just as it disarmed men erotically without unmanning them. Whether this really helped create more equality between the sexes, or just equalized their narcissism, I'm not sure.

It can't be a coincidence that Armani's low-risk, evasive chic—evasive about class, age, aggression, and desire—conquered the headlines at a moment of high-risk sexual behavior and violent political struggle, or that it dominated the luxury market, at least in America, throughout a decade of rapacious economic speculation. In an essay in the catalogue, the Italian journalist Natalia Aspesi reminds us that Milan in the nineteen-seventies was an "epicenter" of protest and terrorism. Remembering "the rotten eggs . . . hurled at their dazzling ensembles at the historic opening of La Scala in 1968," the rich had disguised themselves on the street in "irreproachable garments." Armani, she notes, "remained detached from the enraged city," working on his first collections, which would redefine the irreproachable.

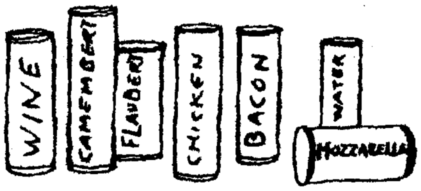
A week before the Guggenheim retrospective opened, I visited the Armani flagship store on Madison Avenue. The racks looked a bit picked over, perhaps because the choicest merchandise is often set aside for the most faithful customers. Many of the shoppers were foreign, and no one was under fifty. A South American was vetting the classically cut dark suits and feathery chiffon blouses with a younger woman who was either her daughter or her personal shopper. There was a mother of the bride with her best friend, and a business executive on her cell phone, pulling together a travel wardrobe while she booked her flight. They were all attractive women of substance, but fashion civilians. The élite commandos have not worn Armani for some time. Fashion on the front lines is by nature subversive, and Armani prefers, as he once put it, "to be a reassuring figure." His customers need that reassurance—to receive it and to project it. The last time I was in a jury room, both the prosecutor, a woman, and the defendant, a Dominican drug lord, wore Armani suits, or decent copies.

Armani's reach is still wide, and his profits are commensurate. The company is Italy's leading fashion house in sales. And there is also something proud, perhaps even noble, in his refusal to deviate from principles he once articulated to the Italian style oracle Anna Piaggi: "First of all, I must preserve my own image . . . an image which has, in turn, created a certain kind of woman. Consequently I must never allow avant-garde or retro tendencies to work their way into my own personal backdrop."

But avant-garde and retro describe everything that is in fashion. And Armani's retrospective at the Guggenheim, timed to celebrate his twenty-fifth anniversary in the business, has received more editorial coverage this autumn—almost all of it loving—than his collections. That, surely, was its main point.

Critics of the Guggenheim have long complained that the curved walls and open well of Wright's rotunda make an uncongenial exhibition space for art, particularly painting, and some have even suggested that the architect intended his dynamic container to forever outshine its contents. The architecture does invite you to keep moving, while a picture requires that you stand still. That sinuous unfurling of planes and bays, however, proves to be nearly ideal for a high-end retail showroom, perhaps because to shop is to navigate an alimentary canal of desire.

There are four hundred appetizing and deluxe pieces of Armani's work in the show, served up against a background of taupe walls, ivory screens, and alcoves finished like the surface of a crackled riverbed. The floor of a room full of black and gold dresses glows like a light box; a crescent of stylized beach is spiked with fibre-optic reeds. The museum's spiral terraces have been scrimmed by Robert Wilson, who designed the installation, in a continuous bandage of taut, theatrical gauze that follows the curvature of the ramps. The clothes are cleverly mounted on headless, nearly invisible armatures spotlit by A. J. Weissbard, and invested, like those partygoers I once glimpsed through the windows of the Roman villa, with hauteur.



I had always thought that Armani's gift was for a kind of sensuous abstraction—that, say, of an urban landscape. This show suggests that I was mistaken. The pensive daywear in his signature, monochrome palette looks a little thyroid-deficient next to a collection of evening clothes that display a dazzling range, not only of inventiveness with pattern and texture but of emotion. There are tunics encrusted with pearls and embroidery whose surface richness is tempered by their simplicity of line; a strapless, fluted column of black and white bugle beads that pays homage to a rug dealer's fly curtain; a gray silk tea gown cut from a Gauguin print bleached of its color and tattooed with steel beads; a gossamer shift of camomile tulle and spun gold appliquéd with jewelled spiders; floral chiffon dinner suits plastered with sequins that brave (and defy) vulgarity; and—best of breed—the frock of a décolleté shepherdess abstracted from a Fragonard, stripped of all embellishment, and rendered in sooty velvet.

I usually work the Guggenheim the way I do Takashimaya, taking the elevator to the top floor and walking down. At the Armani show, I started at the bottom, but when I got to the top I decided to take another look, and on the trip back the installation seemed to give off a faint whiff of embalming fluid. All the wrapping and muffling—the floors have been carpeted, too—creates a disembodied effect, which is heightened by the dreamy ashram music of Michael Galasso, but even more so by the absence of any useful program notes or critical focus.

This so-called retrospective invites you to worship Armani's virtuosity in a vacuum. The exhibits have been grouped by color and theme, without regard for chronology or, in fact, content. There is almost nothing from the nineteen-seventies—Armani's formative years—and very little from the eighties. A handy number of ensembles are still for sale, and, indeed, a vast chamber on the top floor is devoted to the wishfully youthful, tepid pastels for Spring 2000.

The curators' choices in general seem

precious and repetitive. There are none of the uniforms Armani has designed, over the years, for ordinary people like taxi-drivers, policemen, soccer players, flight attendants, and military personnel, which might have helped offset the impression—however expensively cultivated by Armani himself—that his raison d'être is to dominate the Academy Awards. His Oscarwear gets—as it deserves—its own shrine, papered with blurry star closeups and raked by a spotlight. On the far wall, one can watch a silent video collage of scenes from the films for which Armani has designed the costumes. They are often films in which the costumes have more affect than the actors. The most engaging is a clip from "American Gigolo" in which a nubile Richard Gere, naked to the waist and grooving to inaudible rock music, packs his overnight case with Armani shirts and ties.

Only a fool or a mystic seeks the moral high ground on a commercial floodplain. A museum can be "both a theme park and a cultural institution," the director of the Guggenheim, Thomas Krens, told reporters after the press preview. So be it. (I've also accepted that I'll probably never spend a night with Arnold Schwarzenegger, but at least I got to stand next to his empty tuxedo.) Unfortunately, the show's catalogue fulfills neither the expectations one has of a theme-park brochure—which usually provides a map of the rides—nor those of a scholarly publication that purports to document an exhibition. With the exception of the endnotes, it is devoted almost entirely to puffery. Some is delirious, like that of the curator Germano Celant, who describes Armani's work as "a dynamic, nonstatic notion that went so far as to allow clothing to exist as an open-ended, formless condition covering the closed form of the body." Other contributions, like John Travolta's, are all too painfully intelligible: "When I first met Giorgio Armani in 1979, he made me the best-dressed American there was. Today, he's made everybody around the world the best-dressed person they can be, and we all love him for it. Thank you, Giorgio."

There is a lot more of this goofy drivel, otherwise known as advertising copy, not only from other celebrity recipients of free clothes but from well-known figures once on the designer's payroll, like Lee Radziwill, his "muse" and public-relations consultant, and from prime-time product ambassadors, like Pat Riley, who modelled Armani suits to so many high-rolling sports fans at Madison Square Garden. A great artist—and surely one is a great artist if the Guggenheim gives one a retrospective?—deserves more artfulness.

Perhaps some of the airheaded dotting is a case of the museum world succumbing to the fashion world's delusion about its artistic purity. Everyone's collection—from Valentino's to that of the East Village designers Imitation of Christ—is art for art's sake. Never mind that "trauma and insanity" were popular runway themes this season, or that Alexander McQueen showed his work in a padded cell. Designers don't even have "shops" anymore, since no one's in trade. You now visit ascetically curated "spaces," and the most prestigious of them have been conceived by an architect who is also responsible for some great modernist public building, like Rem Koolhaus (Prada's) or Richard Gluckman (Helmut Lang's).

But hagiography is almost invariably a symptom of beholdenness. In January of 1999, Thomas Krens proposed the retrospective to Armani, who accepted. A few months later, Krens contacted Armani again, suggesting that he become a "global sponsor" of future, unspecified Guggenheim projects. Armani subscribed to his appeal with a contribution in the neighborhood of fifteen million dollars. When bugged by ten journalists in a row about "promotional considerations" and the appearance of impropriety created by the conjunction of the large gift and the major show, Krens responded with barely suppressed impatience. "Life is promotion," he said.

The famously reticent designer, who didn't attend the dinner party after the gala preview for six hundred of his most photogenic friends, wasn't giving interviews. But in an old issue of his in-house style magazine, *Emporio Armani*, I found a nice epigraph. "I hate to see my clothes exhibited as a symbol of discretion tainted by a veil of hypocrisy," he said. Whatever that means. ◆

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THE ART WORLD

BRITISH FLASH

Having fun with Bridget Riley and Damien Hirst.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

Something big is happening in art. It is a turn against the edifying and the difficult, toward the exciting and the self-explanatory. It is about manners—clarified relations between artists and their public. The nineteen-sixties are back in play, not nostalgically but as the source of a usable tradition. Though evidence of the great change is widespread, it is particularly apparent in two current New York shows of English artists. The first is an amazing small retrospective of the veteran abstract painter Bridget Riley, at the Dia Center for the Arts. The second is a dicey but highly enjoyable epic production at Larry Gagosian's Chelsea space by the king of the so-called Young British Artists, Damien Hirst. (The Riley will run until June, the Hirst until December 16th.) Both shows are revelatory, no matter how you feel about what's revealed. If you loathe the Hirst, you will have lots of company, but this won't let you off the hook of his significance. In Riley's case, a touch of incredulity is understandable. Viewing her Dia show, which presents paintings that were made between 1961 and 2000, is like opening a time capsule and finding today's newspaper.

I dimly recall New York's rude welcome of Riley in 1965, when her work appeared in a show at MOMA called "The Responsive Eye." For a while, she was famous as the star of an abortive movement, Op art, which seemed to endorse anything that jittered in the eye. Op scored a passing hit in popular culture. Designers and poster makers blended its retina-strumming devices into psychedelia; some of them directly ripped off Riley's linear patterns. But in the art world Op went nowhere. As a neophyte at the time, I loyally scorned Riley as a contemptible faddist. She insulted our seriousness, you see. Minimalists and color-field painters were contesting the high ground of intellectual respectability. Even lately triumphant Pop art was in bad odor with a new, esoteric critical establishment. To say a kind word for Pop, one cited the anarchistic authority of Marcel Duchamp or argued that Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein were really high-modernists in populist mufti. Riley's dazzling efficiencies couldn't be defended on either score. Her work wasn't the least bit intellectual—merely very intelligent. As the nineteen-sixties unravelled, aesthetic acuity like Riley's lost out to artistic strategies that became increasingly arcane, defensive, and lugubrious.

Riley's majestic and delightful Dia show makes a bid to reverse that supposed verdict of history. Consider the spanking freshness of "Crest" (1964), a diamond-shaped canvas that displays the most unsettling and familiar of the artist's early motifs: a dense, S-curving array of thin black and white lines. At first glance, much of Riley's Op stuff appears stable—it goes nuts only when you gaze at it. In "Crest," the meltdown of crisscrossing afterimages seems to have been under way before you entered the room. Silvery blazes flash from side to side where the lines bend. Every effort to stop them is like gasoline thrown on a fire, incurring a fresh explosion. Some people report that the optical effect gives them the panicky sense that their eyes aren't working right. But "Crest" is precisely about how our eyes work. Relax and the experience of looking becomes exquisite fun. The tension in our response is elegantly simple: it's between our knowledge of what's there versus our limited ability to see. The painting models a transaction between artist and viewer which is as obvious as a handshake. Is this enough? Do we want something more from a work of art? Riley's work leaves us free to look elsewhere, knowing that we have experienced something specific in a way that cannot be improved upon. And she burdens our quest with an exacting standard of integrity.

"Crest" shares a room with other hyperactive black-and-white paintings, such as the devilish "White Disks" (1964). At first, you might think that the title is a misprint, because the small canvas displays only scattered black disks in three sizes. But start to look and afterimages that are whiter than the white ground pop like flashbulbs in a snowstorm. These early works are Riley's most important achievements, though perhaps not her best. They are less richly satisfying than most of the other paintings on view, which range from austere fields of tiny, infinitesimally quaking ellipses to luxuriant cascades of stripes and petals of rare colors. Riley has made a career of refining her art's original, radical terms, as was seen in a recent beautiful show at PaceWildenstein, which displayed many paintings from the eighties and nineties. She now arranges colored stripes, parallelograms, and scimitar shapes to generate visual intensities in which illusion hangs fire, tantalizing rather than zapping the eye.

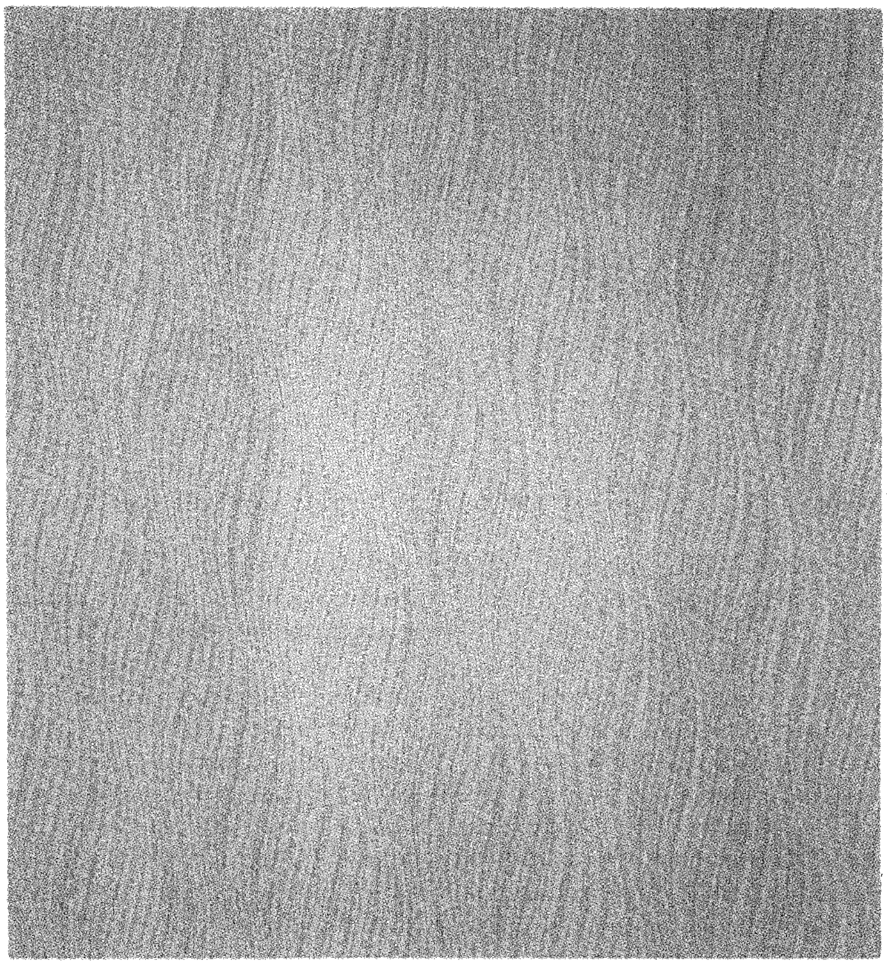
"Crest" and its ilk dramatize the issue of Riley's historic ostracism. What was so unacceptable about them? I think it was the utter clarity of their dealings with viewers, their way of forestalling interpretation. Their bluntness stymied intellectuals, and their impersonality bummed out romantics. The sixties had begun in a spirit of clarity, with youthful embraces of democratic taste and pragmatic joy. Then the shock of so much change, so fast, set in. As the art world expanded, it also fragmented, and artists retreated into subcultural parishes. Today, it seems plausible to look back on the past three decades in art as one long case of post-traumatic stress.

Damien Hirst implicitly bets that we are now ready to pick up where art left off in the sixties, by renewing a celebratory social contract. As usual, Hirst relies on broad, gruesome jokes to establish quick communication. The new show's wordy title—"Theories, Models, Methods, Approaches, Assumptions, Results, and Findings"—refers to science, in this case involving autopsies. A clever and grisly catalogue combines panegyrics to the artist with illustrated articles from the *Journal of Clinical Forensic Medicine,* with titles like "The pattern of homicidal slash /chop injuries." Only a few of the show's dauntingly various and complicated works hew to postmortem themes, but all of them comfortably inhabit a force field between test tubes and viscera. This is even true of several seductive grid paintings of colored disks. Though squarely in the tradition of Riley, they become ineffably disquieting when we learn that their hues come from the palette of pharmaceutical product design. Among the show's more aggressive works are a twenty-foot-tall medical model of a flayed man in painted bronze; many vitrines containing ersatz body parts and animal skeletons; thousands of handmade replicas of pills and capsules on mirrored shelves; a human skull with Ping-Pong balls dancing above its eye sockets on jets of air; and huge aquariums in which living fish explore the fully equipped examination rooms of gynecologists (vile humor is plainly intended). Other works incorporate an animatronic puppet, video monitors broadcasting commercials for pain relievers at painful volume, and—oh, see for yourself.

Talk about crowd-pleasing! Ebullient throngs mill through the Gagosian's immense spaces. Here and there, you may observe two or more viewers hotly arguing. (It's been ages since that sight was common in galleries.) Producing the show cost a fortune, it is said. This seems right. Hirst performs on the scale of the art world's size and prosperity in the year 2000. He is excessive only in relation to bygone times, when the spirit of potlatch came cheap. I am reminded of the high-water-mark opening of the sixties. In 1966, Day-Glo cow wallpaper and drifting Mylar balloons by Andy Warhol beguiled a smallish mob in Leo Castelli's tidy gallery on East Seventy-seventh Street. That casually delirious show, which epitomized an era of stoned élan, was better than Hirst's strenuous extravaganza. And there are a few present-day artists who are cleverer than Hirst at combining high artistry and a common touch—witness Jeff Koons's flowering sculpture "Puppy" at Rockefeller Center. But no artist since Warhol has nailed the formula of public engagement in such a generous way. Here's the idea: art that splits the difference between deep things that everybody knows and superficial conditions that everybody shares—with whatever may be in the middle, including anything personal, pointedly left out.

The deep things in Hirst's show are death, sex, disease, drugs, madness, and the like; the conditions are technological. As it happens, the pieces I like best are the simplest and the mildest: two glassed bins in which upward-pointed blowers, in the centers of sloped floors, keep masses of Ping-Pong balls bopping around. One bin, which has relatively few balls and steep slopes, gives the balls little rest. In the other, the balls may become trapped in crowds or marooned on ledges for minutes at a time. Mesmerized, I succumbed to a narrative dementia, identifying with the little off-white spheres. My imagination concluded that the two bins represent different types of social milieu—such as, if you please, the current art scenes of London (comparatively sparse and peppy) and New York (congested and sluggish). Whether or not Hirst had this in mind, he does reliably give one a sense of thinking along with him. His meanings may be bizarre, but they are never enigmatic—unlike those of Matthew Barney, the young American artist whose style and ambition are closest to his. Barney's narcissistic extravagances in many mediums—mainly his gorgeous, myth-mongering "Cremaster" films—are smack on the wrong side of art's present trend. We are no longer in a mood to penetrate thickets of mystery in pursuit of an artist's secrets. We've got our own problems.

The trouble with Hirst resembles that of a certain Presidential candidate, who is impeccable on the issues but practically impossible to admire. Like Al Gore, he is too damned anxious for our approval. Hirst comes on like a rabid dog that ultimately just wants its ears scratched. ("He's fake cruel," a friend of mine remarked.) I came away from the show with listless feelings for the individual works. But my general impression of an entertaining pageant remains strong. For once, here's a show that reflects the character of today's teeming art audience. Everybody at the Hirst county fair sees exactly what everybody else is seeing—and everybody can't wait to talk about it. If it all has the easy participation atmosphere of a Broadway musical, that's the point. We can no longer pretend that the art world, from big-tent museums to niche-market boutiques, is above being a cultural industry. Does this vulgar truth spell doom for serious artistic aspirations? Keeping Bridget Riley in mind, I don't think so. We'll see. ♦



Riley's "Andante 1" (1980) at Dia: An artist whose work forestalled interpretation.

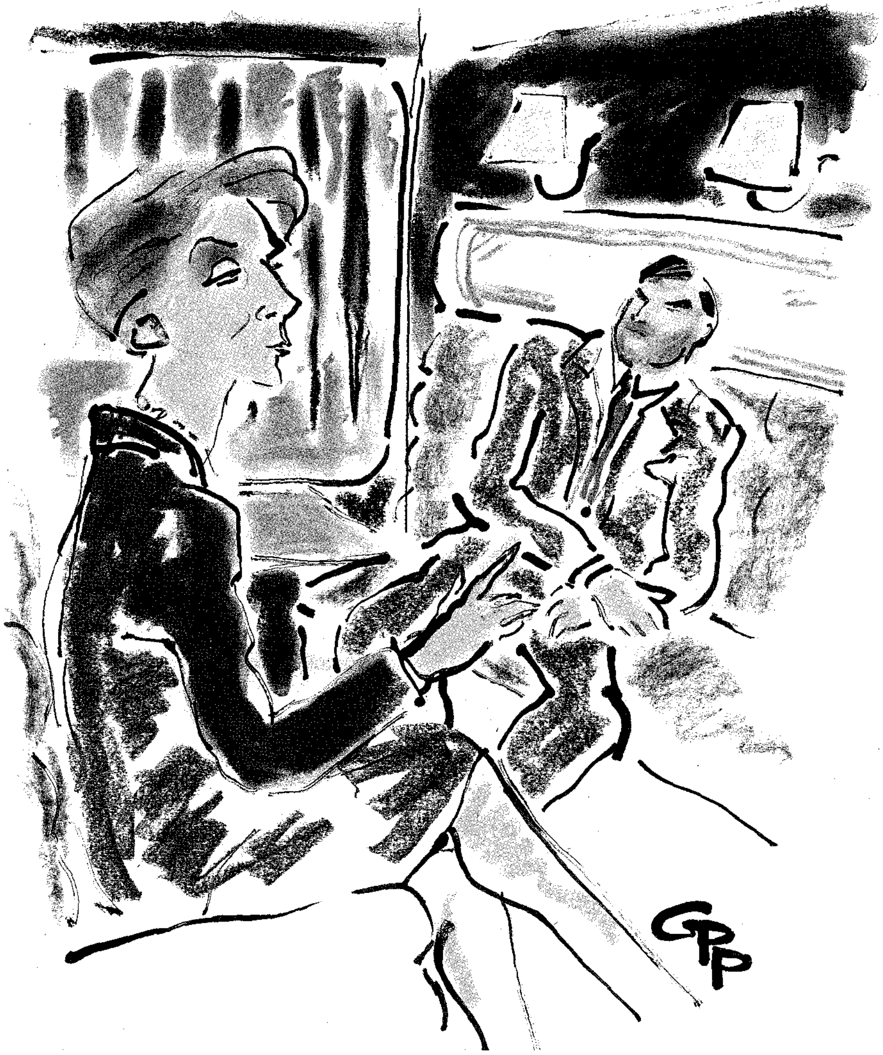
COURTESY DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

THE THEATRE

DEPARTURES

The author of "Art" on the art of life.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN



Reflections of the way life used to be: Atkins and Bates in "The Unexpected Man."

I have seen Yasmina Reza's play "The Unexpected Man," now at the Promenade, described as "small," and if that's what it is, it is small in the best way. Its pleasures feel private and special—you only want to tell *certain* of your friends about it. It follows by two years the Broadway production of Reza's "Art," whose actual qualities were hard to discern amid the frenzy of attention it attracted abroad and in New York. If you read the play now, what comes to the fore is not the debate about the definition of art or the value of art but the writer's fine-tuned ear for how relationships work—in this case, the friendship between three men arguing over a painting one of them has bought—and how each moment of fragility or of stability also contains its opposite.

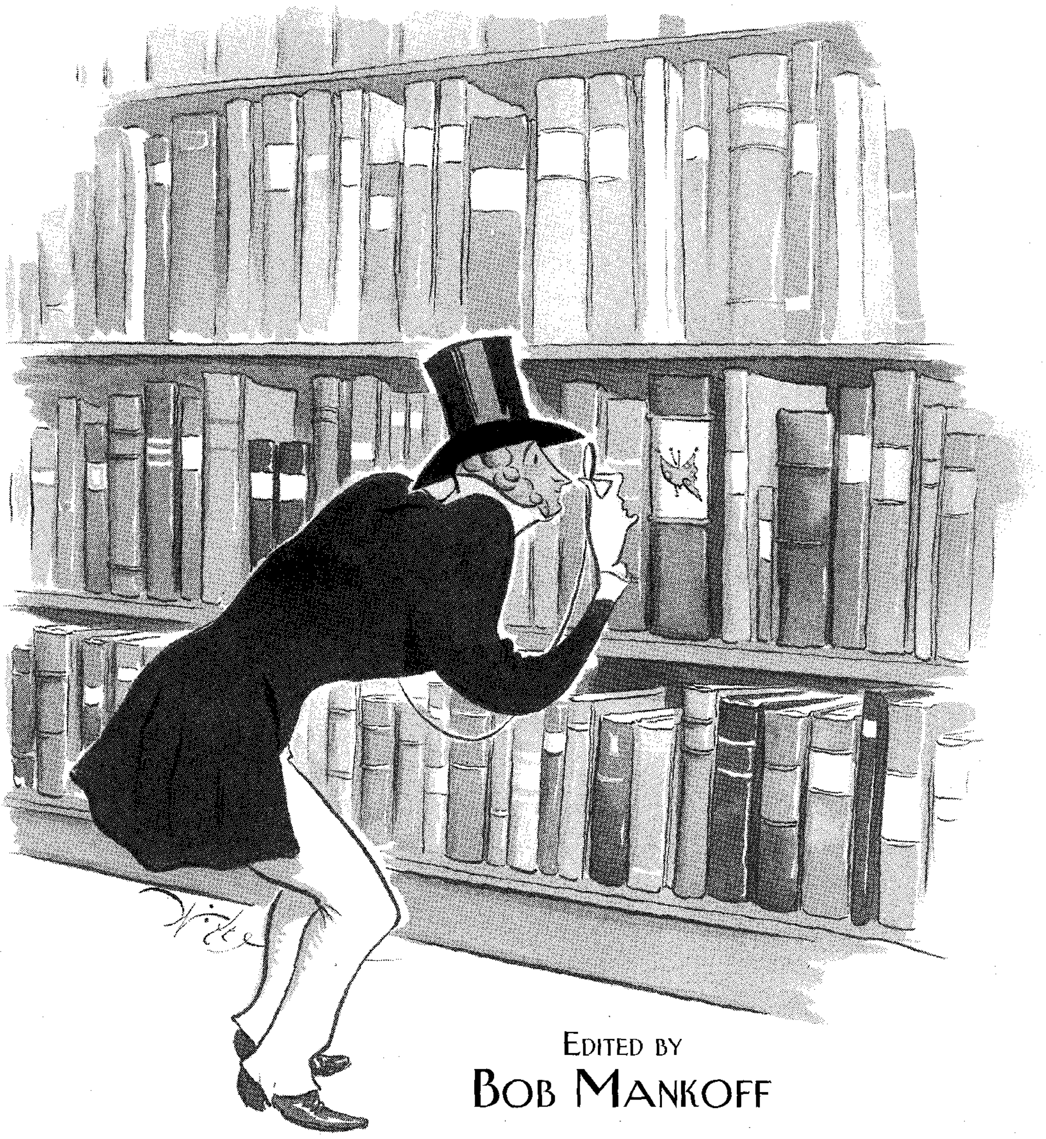
"The Unexpected Man," too, is about the art of life, and Reza has set up a rather challenging situation within which to explore the subject, both for herself as a writer and for the actors. There are just two—they play characters called "The Man" and "The Woman"—and they are alone together in a compartment of a train that is going from Paris to Frankfurt. They are, however, not just *any* two—they are Alan Bates and Eileen Atkins, and the play's charm no doubt has something to do with its casting, particularly in the case of the magnificent Atkins, who also played the role in the recent London production. (Bates's role was played there by Michael Gambon.) He is a writer, and she, it turns out, is a faithful, avid reader of his books, and she even has his latest novel, "The Unexpected Man," in her handbag. But although she recognizes him, they don't speak to each other for almost the entire hour-and-ten-minute duration of the play—until, some fifty minutes into the piece, he asks her permission to open the window. Instead, they do what people travelling on trains used to do before the days of the laptop computer—they reflect on things, only here they do their reflecting out loud, in long, alternating monologues. It's one thing to write dialogue that works; Reza has managed to write thoughts that work—the characters' streams of words share an in-and-out-of-focus quality, and yet are as crucially unalike and individual as keys that look the same but open different doors.

The play (which, like "Art," was directed by Matthew Warchus) begins with Bates speaking for almost ten minutes about himself, and the bitterness he feels about, well, pretty much everything—his friend's choice of a girlfriend, his sex life, his career and his legacy, his daughter's marrying a much older man. "If she says he's fifty-one, he's probably twice that," he says. Though it is never exactly stated as such, age—his own—seems to be at the root of his discontent: why else would he be thinking about whether or not he will be the subject of a biography after he's dead? "The biography of a writer, absolutely ridiculous.... Who can say anything remotely coherent about anybody else's life? Who can say anything remotely coherent about life in general?" This thought, of course, leads him right back to himself: "Did I write what I wanted to write? No, never. I wrote what I was capable of writing, not what I wanted to. All you ever do is what you're capable of." He congratulates himself on not being one of those "great providers of opinions who turn up on the book programs," but within seconds finds other reasons to relegate himself to the ranks of the damned. The combination of superheated self-regard and self-

GLADYS PERINT PALMER

The reader's guide to laughter.

THE NEW YORKER BOOK OF LITERARY CARTOONS



Edited by
Bob Mankoff

From the stunning and the sublime to the purple and pretentious, here, in 104 drawings, are dead-on portraits and eye-opening ruminations on all things bookish, writerly, and readerly as illuminated by renowned *New Yorker* cartoonists, including Charles Barsotti, Roz Chast, Ed Koren and Victoria Roberts.

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AVAILABLE IN HARDCOVER AT BOOKSTORES EVERYWHERE loathing we see in him is not peculiar to writers, but it is an occupational hazard, and possibly an occupational necessity; and, luckily, the aspects of talent that are grotesque in real life can be entertaining on the stage, at least for the duration of a short train ride. Bates, grayer now and more thickset than he was when he wrestled naked with Oliver Reed in "Women in Love," thirty-one years ago, radiates both the complacency and the psychic unease appropriate to a literary lion who has become the thorn in his own paw.

The writer's thoughts don't turn to the woman sitting opposite him until we are well into the journey, and it's funny that his first thought about her is so off the mark—funny because you're not sure if his stereotypical, belated musings are due to his being a self-absorbed writer or his being a male chauvinist, or both. "Strange this woman never reads anything. . . . Not even a spot of *Marie Claire*." Little does he know that she is his ideal reader, or that since the beginning of the trip she has been conducting a one-sided conversation with him. Her thoughts about the writer emerge from and wind around her thoughts about a good friend of hers who has recently died; he, and other friends who have disappeared or changed with age and time, are her real preoccupation here. Judging the writer to be "a man with whom I'd like to discuss certain things," she reflects on a chaste but romantic friendship she had with another man during her marriage, until he himself married, at which point, she says with a controlled sense of loss, "We both went on pretending we were still intimates." When she reflects on his penchant for boasting to her about his young son, Atkins is hilarious: "A man I'd known as outrageous and insolent, reduced to shreds, liquefied by paternity. And who, with no memory of himself, or me, sat there boasting of his liquefaction." The passage ends with a feeling of sadness and hurt, but Atkins, as always, both shows and hides the range of her character's emotions with perfect, masterly balance; and part of what is touching about this woman is that she has reached an age—and she knows it—where humor and regret become indistinguishable from each other.

When the man and the woman do finally have a conversation, they begin in coyness—a very adult coyness, rooted in acute self-awareness on both sides.

CONVERSATION

At dinner their first night
He looked at her, her bright green eyes,
In candlelight.
They laughed and told the hundred stories,
And kissed, and went to bed.
"Shh, shh," she said,
"I want to put my legs around your head."
Green eyes, green eyes.

At dawn they sat with coffee
And smoked another cigarette
As quietly
Companionship and eros met
In conversation's afterplay,
On their first day,
And late for the work she loved, she drove away.
Green eyes, green eyes.

—*Donald Hall*

Reza doesn't freight the moment with too much meaning; it is what it is, and what it means to you depends on how you look at the world, on how you would answer the questions the writer asks himself early in the play: "What is it that counts? The long run? Or the moment? What is it that's really of value?" Reza's artful play may persuade you that there is nothing of greater value in all the world than a brief encounter between strangers on a train.

In form, Neil Simon's new play, "The Dinner Party," now at the Music Box, after runs in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., is a departure; perhaps taking a page from Reza's "Art" book, Simon has set the play in Paris, at an opulent restaurant, and he gets us in and out in about ninety intermissionless minutes. Even his six characters—three divorced couples—are French, and not simply transplanted, fish-out-of-water Simon-Americans. But any promise of elegant, witty Continental stage fare implied by the characters' French names—André, Mariette, Claude, and so on—and the dining room's glittering chandelier and Fragonardesque murals is soon and utterly broken; in content, "The Dinner Party" falls not far outside the tradition of Simon's clutch of "Suite" comedies, with their running, or limping, jokes and secondhand shtick. This is a play in which a character responds to the question "Do you like Fragonard?" by saying, "Not before dinner, no." (*Le boob* who says this is played by Henry Winkler, who, in a cast that includes Len Cariou, John Ritter, Penny Fuller, Veanne Cox, and Jan Maxwell, has been given the lamest bits of business to work with.)

Soon the guests discover that the man who arranged the dinner party, the lawyer who happens to have handled their divorces, is not going to show up (he's in Sardinia—naturally), but it's a long time before they, and the audience, find out why they've been brought together, and the payoff is not particularly rewarding. Toward the end of "The Dinner Party," which was directed by John Rando, there is actually a moment of feeling—a moment of genuine poignance—that Simon does not snuff out prematurely with a gag, but the play's message of forgiveness and renewal rings hollow after we've sat through an hour and a half of hoary alimony jokes and a battery of B-list one-liners. (Cariou's character says to his ex-wife, "Oh, stop it, Gabrielle. I feel like I'm talking to a machine that spits out poisoned tennis balls.") Simon can do, and has done, better than this, and perhaps he should stick to his home turf. His best material is right here in his own back yard, and after this experiment with tarte tatin let's hope he'll come back and make a fresh American apple pie. ♦

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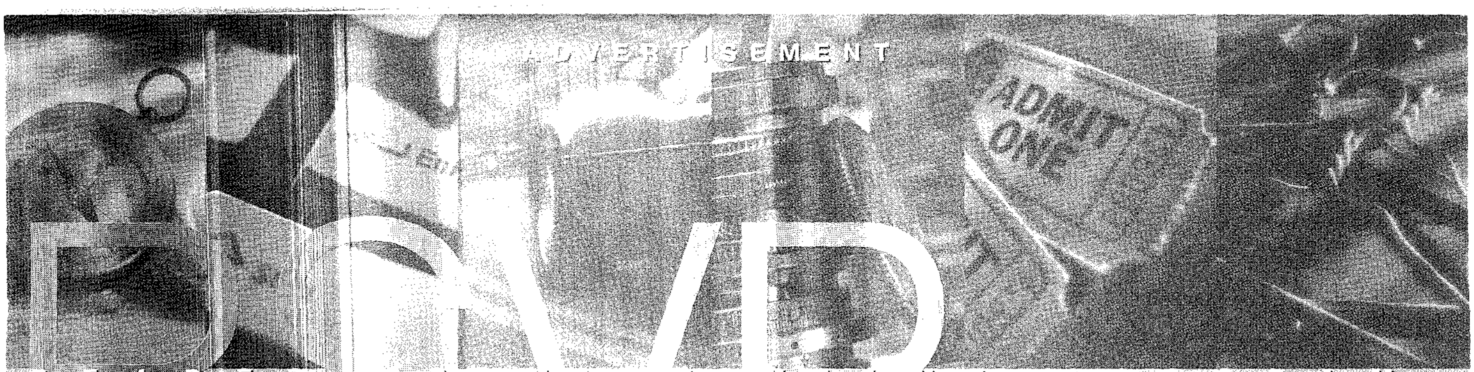

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

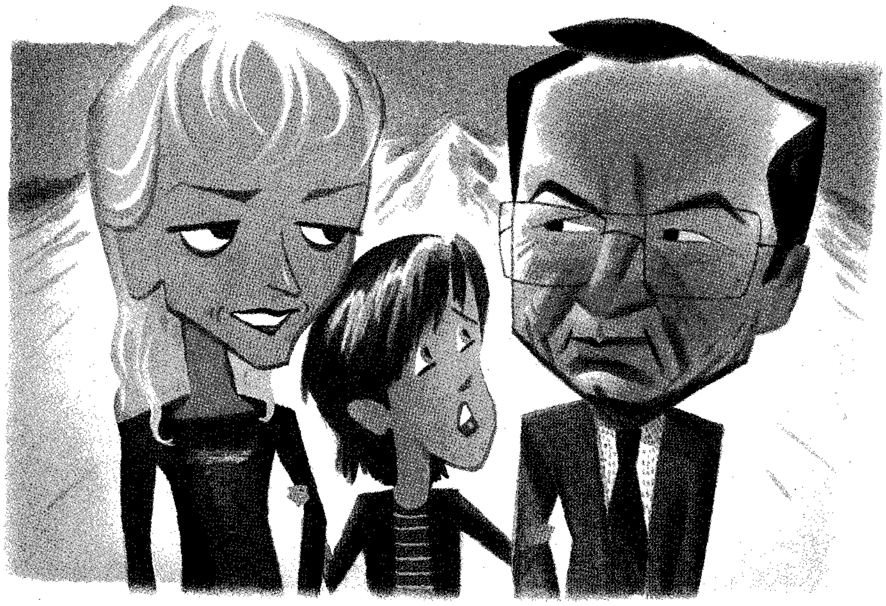
I SEE GOOD PEOPLE

"Pay It Forward" and "The Legend of Bagger Vance."

BY DAVID DENBY

Some movie actors seem so central and right in their responses to life that for the audience they come to represent sanity itself. The special skill of these actors may be produced by instinct or by a quirk of temperament. It may even be created by conscious ambition, but whatever the cause, and whatever the role, such performers have a homing-pigeon dependability—they seem to head straight for the center of every emotion. Heroes of common sense, they anchor our responses, offering not so much a series of individual characters as repeated idealized versions of themselves (which some of us, in the dreaming manner of audiences, take as versions of ourselves). Spencer Tracy, frowning and pulling up his shoulders, performed this function for audiences a half century ago. James Stewart worked from a base of sanity and centrality, too, but then Stewart, in one of the more startling coups in American film acting, stretched himself into snarling egotism and even madness in the great films he made in the nineteen-fifties with Anthony Mann ("The Far Country") and Alfred Hitchcock ("Vertigo"). The shock of Stewart's anger wouldn't have been as strong if he hadn't been such a straight arrow in his earlier work.

The latest avatar of sanity in American movies is Helen Hunt. She's as solid as a rock—even when she's playing a character with wobbly knees. "Pay It Forward," which was written by Leslie Dixon (from Catherine Ryan Hyde's novel) and directed by Mimi Leder, is mostly an embarrassment, but the movie is still worth seeing for Hunt, who gives a first-rate performance as an alcoholic Las Vegas cocktail waitress and single mom—a woman with lousy judgment who wants to do the right thing but doesn't know how. Hunt grew famous in television comedy, where successful acting is more a matter of pace than of depth or psychology, yet in movies she has built TV-nurtured timing into a major character device. Presented with something strange or hostile, she will offer a frank, challenging stare, hold back for an instant, and then spill out her words in an exasperated rush. The stop-and-go rhythm allows her to be brisk and reflective at the same time. We actually watch her thinking, which gives us a rooting interest in what her characters say.



Lost in Las Vegas: Helen Hunt, Haley Joel Osment, and Kevin Spacey.

ERIC PALMA

In "Pay It Forward," her Arlene McKinney is aging fast from booze and too little sleep. In a Vegas topless joint, with the lights turned low and her breasts pushed up, she might pass for twenty-five, but not at home, where she guzzles all the liquor that she has hidden around the place, passes out on her bed, and guiltily faces her eleven-year-old son (Haley Joel Osment) in the morning with mascara running all over her face. She looks like a witch without power. Hunt takes briskness to the next level—when Arlene meets someone new, she's abrupt and harsh, even crude, because she's afraid she'll be annihilated if she doesn't immediately go on the offensive. Hunt brings out the self-destroying pride of a brave but damaged woman. And even though Arlene is a mess, we're with her, because we can see how hard she works to get things right.

Kevin Spacey stretches himself, too, but not with the same happy results. He's Mr. Simonet, Eugene Simonet, a talented but embittered junior-high-school teacher with burn marks all over his face. Characters with physical deformities and inner wounds are an awful trap for a proud and ambitious actor, and for a while we think Spacey may escape. There's a decently written early scene in which he challenges his seventh-grade social-studies class to come up with an idea that could actually have some effect on the world. Haley Joel, as Trevor, Arlene's boy, devises the scheme of "pay it forward"—you perform an entirely gratuitous service for three people and then insist that they do the same for three more. It's a chain letter of benevolence. Trevor helps strangers, but, playing Cupid, he's more eager to help his mother and Mr. Simonet, whom he tries to bring together. Cornered, Spacey initially retreats into his shell. He has always brought a suggestion of malevolence to what he does, and since he conveys high intelligence, too, we've enjoyed the mocking style of a man just barely able to keep his nastier emotions to himself. But in "Pay It Forward" Spacey has to sacrifice that aura, he has to reveal himself, and for what? For a weepy confession about an abusive father which might have been considered too lurid for a TV movie. Spacey cracks and whimpers, which is not a gratifying sight. "Kevin Spacey Needs a Hug," the October *GQ* cover story proclaims. But he doesn't; if he's going to "open up" in movies, he needs a decently written role.

As a plot device, the idea of unmotivated benevolence is not without promise. Sixty years ago, in a tougher time, Ben Hecht or Preston Sturges would have taken the idea right into satire. In a serious vein, a morally curious writer or director could make something striking out of acts of random grace performed in a dog-eat-dog world. I myself once practiced an eccentric version of it. Whenever I had an envious or hostile thought about someone I knew, I tried to do that person a small favor. But this behavior soon produced a certain wariness among my acquaintances; they not only looked a gift horse in the mouth, they began searching for the sharp teeth, and I abandoned the plan. The movie should have been abandoned, too. Leder and Dixon don't investigate the moral mystery of altruism; they use the idea to work up maudlin situations. There's a drug addict who receives a favor and turns into a saint, and a bum and a crook trying to help other people. Not a single scene devoted to the central idea feels convincing, and the movie is inept in a variety of commonplace ways. The filmmakers employ a complicated past-and-present time structure that doesn't pay forward *or* backward (it's merely confusing); Jay Mohr is wasted in an undeveloped role as an aggressive reporter. At the moment, Hollywood seems unable to ground a story emotionally without some sort of synthetic or mystical concept. Throughout "Pay It Forward," I caught myself wanting to eliminate everything but the slatternly cocktail waitress, her smart, needy kid, and the stuffed-shirt teacher dying for love—all good elements for a shamelessly effective tearjerker. But the movie, I'm afraid, is trying for mythic resonance. After a while, Haley Joel metamorphoses into Holy Jesus. "Pay It Forward" appears to be a Republican fantasy of charity: it ends, literally, with a thousand points of light.

More and more, the sharply focussed urban-smart "Quiz Show" seems an aberration in the soft meadow of Robert Redford's directing career. From the evidence of such movies as "The Milagro Beanfield War," "A River Runs Through It," "The Horse Whisperer," and now "The Legend of Bagger Vance," Redford wants to live in a pre-industrial, pre-media world without sophisticates or phonies, a pastoral utopia in which everyone possesses an earnest soul and hair that shines in the golden light. The colors in "The Legend of Bagger Vance" are beautifully blended; the golfers on a Southern green, in their baggy pants and ties, could be figures from a Chesterfield ad circa 1930. Matt Damon plays a great young Savannah golfer whose morale has been shattered by terrible experiences in the First World War. Will Smith is the angelic caddy who appears out of the gloaming, smiles, and whispers incomprehensible remarks in Damon's ear about feeling, not thinking, his way to his "authentic stroke." Revived by this extraordinary advice, Damon's local hero takes on the greatest golfers of the day, Bobby Jones and Walter Hagen, in a special tournament. "Bagger Vance" is meant to be a tall tale, of course, but Redford has little talent for fantasy. The best he can do is launch the camera—which takes the point of view of the ball—in simulated flights through the air. If you want to know what it feels like to be a Top Flite XL landing with a thunk on the fairway, I can recommend the movie. Otherwise, you might ask whether calling something a legend can possibly excuse this much visual redundancy and simpleminded chatter. ♦

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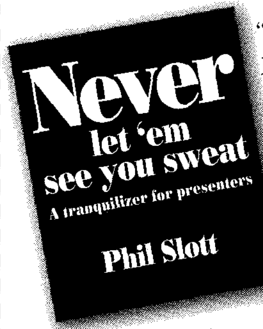

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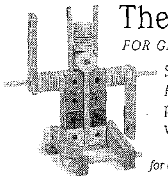

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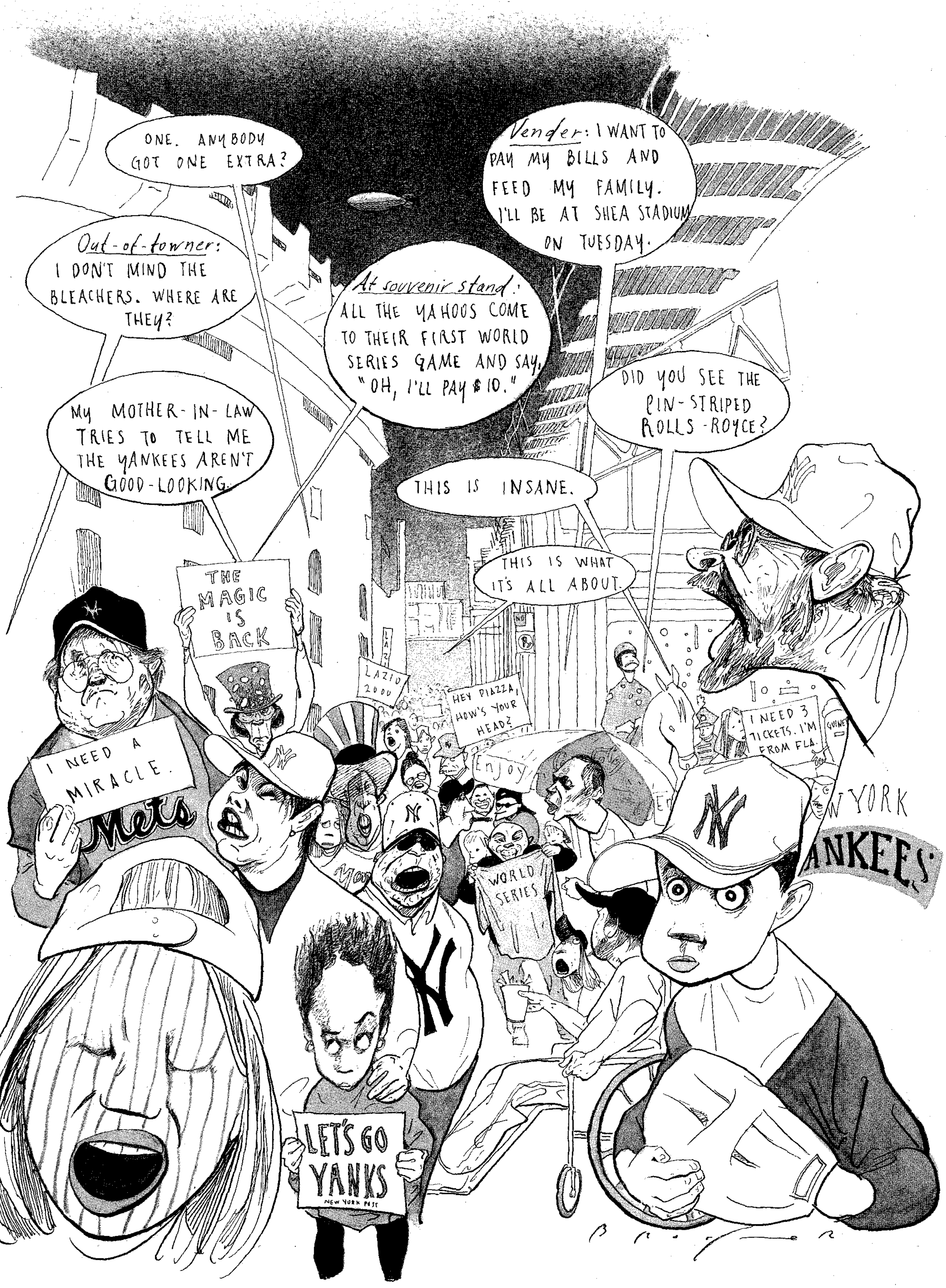
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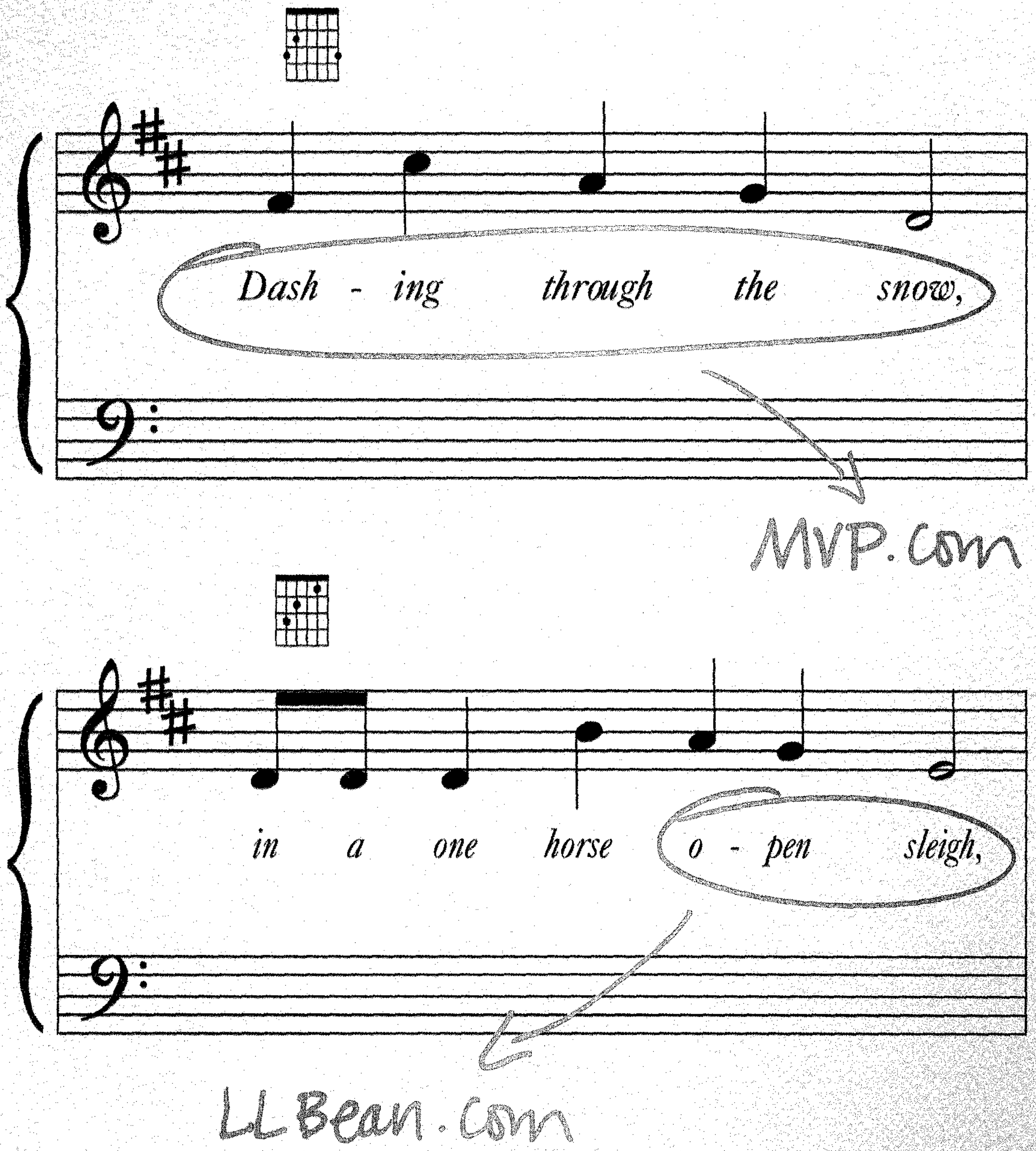
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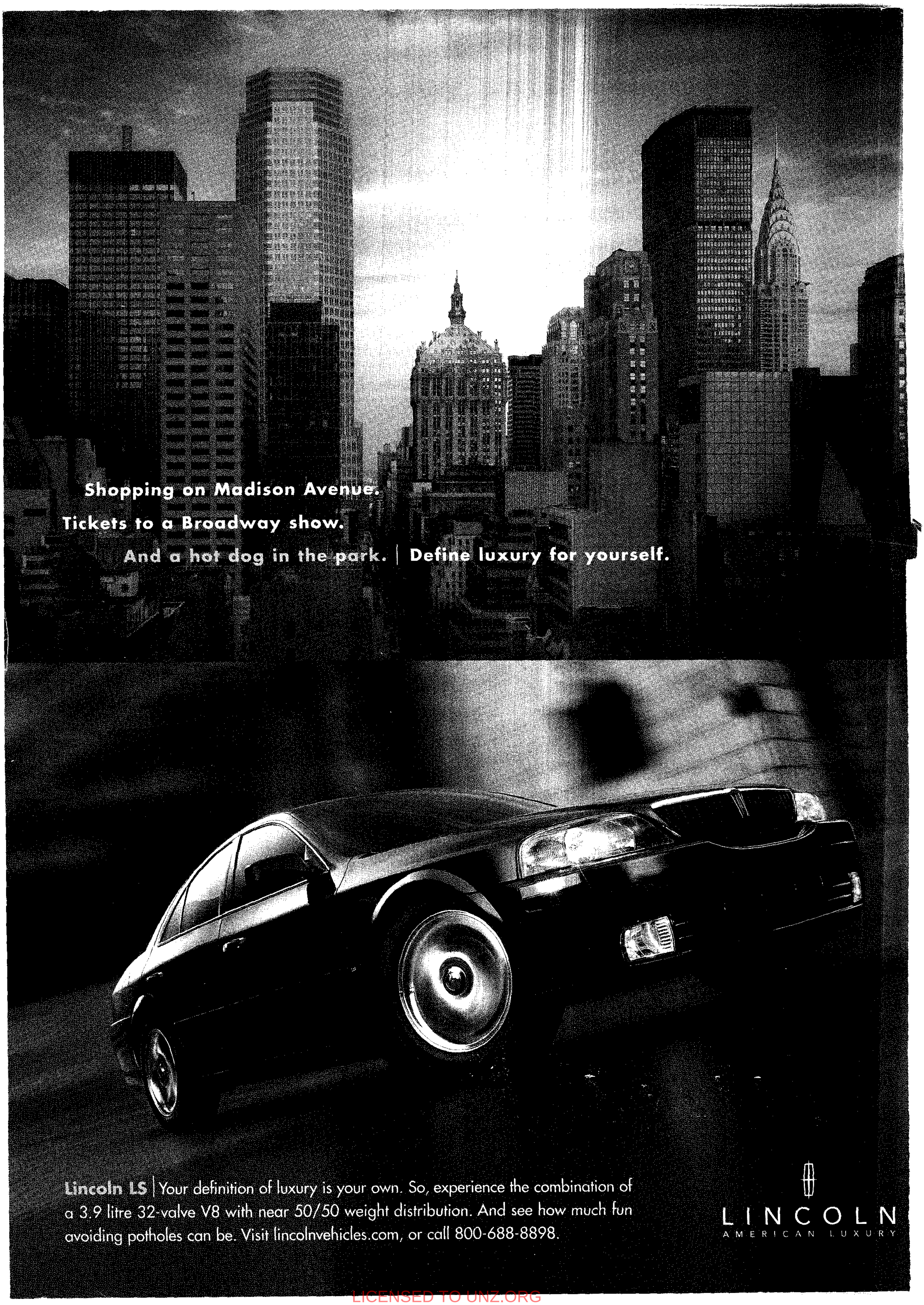
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